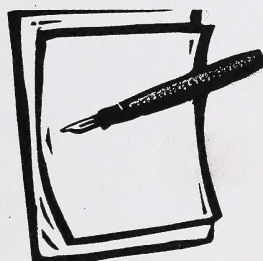


JUN 23 1997

1995

High School Survey



FINAL REPORT

May 1997

Alberta

ADVANCED EDUCATION AND
CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Acknowledgments

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Thanks also to officials of Alberta Education for their assistance. They provided a survey sample and mailing addresses for the graduates who were contacted for this study.

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Executive Summary

Today's youth are being challenged to adapt to different ways of working. Globalization and technological change are restructuring work. The educational requirements of many jobs have increased and the ability to learn and acquire new skills is crucial. As they make multiple transitions between learning and working, their chances of finding rewarding work are much more dependent upon education beyond high school. At the same time, changes in the adult learning system may be influencing student perceptions, choices and decisions.

In December 1995, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development conducted a survey of recent high school graduates. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on how those graduates make decisions regarding their education and future careers. Graduates were asked about their attendance at post-secondary institutions, occupational aspirations, employment status, future enrollment plans and the influence of family on further education. Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to comment on prevailing views of education and work.

The survey results will help government make the adult learning system in Alberta more responsive to the needs of current and future students. The survey results will provide government policy makers with current information from the perspective of students entering the system. Other partners in adult learning will also find value in the information provided.

Alberta Education provided a random sample of 1,304 graduates from a population of 25,293 high school graduates for the survey. These graduates would have received a high school diploma sometime in 1995 and many would have started their post-secondary studies at the time of the survey. To ensure representative coverage of the graduate population, the sample was stratified by three variables: gender, region and whether graduates had the academic requirements to apply for university programs. A total of 705 graduates responded to the survey. After adjusting for those graduates who could not be located, the response rate was 56%.

Graduates who responded to the survey are fairly representative of the high school population in terms of gender, region and eligibility to apply for university programs.

Key Findings

Participation in Further Education

- Recent high school graduates show a high level of interest in pursuing post-secondary studies - most were enrolled full-time directly from high school (59%) or planning to enrol within one year (17%). Graduates from the Edmonton and Calgary regions tended to enrol in degree granting institutions while those from rural areas preferred colleges or technical institutes. Programs were chosen primarily because of personal interest followed by career related reasons as a distant second.
- Gender-based career aspirations persist. Females continue to aspire predominately to Medicine and Health, and Teaching occupations - areas affected by ongoing restructuring. Males were more likely to aspire to Sciences, Engineering and Math occupations. In general, most graduates believe that they require post-secondary education to gain employment. At the same time, many accept the reality that further education offers no job guarantees. Some graduates feel that the returns from investing in further education are not be what they used to be. Nevertheless, many are optimistic and rate their chances of finding work in their chosen careers as good.

- 59% of the graduates who responded to the survey continued their education full-time in post-secondary institutions directly out of high school. Another 3% were enrolled in post-secondary studies on a part-time basis while 9% had returned to high school. All in all, 70% of graduates were actually continuing their education. →See page 10.
- The majority of graduates who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies were attending degree granting institutions (49%), followed by colleges and technical institutes (41%). Another 6% were attending other institutions such as private vocational schools, religious colleges or institutes and Alberta Vocational Colleges. A minority (4%) of graduates were attending institutions outside the province. →See page 10.
- The survey found that male and female graduates were equally likely to enrol full-time in post-secondary studies - 56% and 60% respectively. Females who met the criteria for university eligibility were more likely to enrol than were university eligible males - 84% and 75% respectively. →See page 11.
- Graduates from the Calgary region were the most likely to continue their education (69%) full-time in post-secondary institutions. Graduates from the Edmonton region participated at 56%. Those least likely to continue their education were from other areas of the province with 52% of these graduates pursuing post-secondary studies. Differing eligibility requirements among institutions may have influenced the participation rates and institutions chosen by graduates.¹ For example, recent changes to the enrolment criteria at the University of Calgary for the 1995/96 term may have contributed to higher enrolment rates among Calgary graduates. Eligibility requirements at the University of Alberta were more stringent. Eligibility criteria for private degree granting institutions such as Augustana University College and Concordia College were less stringent than universities. →See page 12.
- In the survey, academic factors are the best predictors of continuing education. Graduates who had higher grade 12 averages, graduated with advanced high school diplomas and who successfully met the minimal requirements for university eligibility were more likely to continue their education. →See pages 12-13.
- Family background characteristics also influenced the likelihood of post-secondary enrolment. In general, graduates whose families encouraged post-secondary education and those who had older siblings who attended were more likely to enrol. The rates at which graduates enrolled also rose with the educational attainment of their mothers. However, the relationship held only for females and for Edmonton region graduates. The educational level of fathers was not related to enrolment at the provincial level but was significant for females and for Edmonton region graduates. →See pages 14-15.
- Proximity to a post-secondary institution did not influence enrolment. Graduates who did not have a post-secondary institution that they could attend without having to move away from home, were as likely to be enrolled full-time as those with proximity. These represented 62% and 58% respectively of graduates. However, there were regional differences in the types of institutions attended as indicated in the Institutions and Programs section. →See page 15.

¹ Some of the difference between Calgary, Edmonton and the rest of the province may be due to a higher response rate from university eligible graduates in Calgary. The response rates of university eligible graduates were 66% for the Calgary region compared to 57% for Edmonton and 61% for other areas of Alberta. The Alberta rate of response for university eligible graduates was 61%.

- Among respondents who were enrolled full-time, almost half gave job or career reasons as most important in their decision to continue their education: 28% were enrolled full-time to prepare for a career while 21% enrolled to improve their job prospects. →See page 16.

Institutions and Programs

- Edmonton and Calgary region graduates who were enrolled full-time were more likely to choose degree granting institutions - 59% and 60% respectively. Graduates from other areas of Alberta were more likely to select colleges or technical institutes (58%). →See page 17.
- Graduates with higher grade 12 averages were more likely to choose degree granting institutions. →See page 19.
- The three most important factors influencing graduates' choice of an institution were program interest (26% of graduates), proximity to home (25%) and the reputation and facilities at the institution (14%). The most significant factor in choosing a program of study was personal interest with 54% of graduates citing this as most important followed by career related reasons as a distant second (21%). →See page 20.
- One-third of those enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies had applied to more than one Alberta institution, and 16% had applied to more than one program. 14% had applied to institutions outside of Alberta. Most graduates chose Alberta institutions; only 5% enrolled in institutions outside the province. →See pages 22-23.
- As a group, graduates relied on a variety of sources to finance their full-time post-secondary studies and living expenses. The sources most often used were parents or family (79%), own savings (59%), own employment earnings (32%). This collective finding also holds at the individual level with the majority of graduates relying on a variety of sources to finance their education. →See pages 25-26.

Graduates Not Continuing With Their Education Full-time in Post-Secondary Studies

- Graduates who were not enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution gave the following reasons as most important in their decision not to attend: taking time to decide what to do (34%), or working or seeking work (21%). Another 19% were not able to further their education for a variety of reasons including: grades that were not high enough, not being accepted at the institution they applied for and financial constraints. →See page 27.
- Among those not enrolled, 56% had definite plans to pursue post-secondary studies while another 26% indicated that they would probably attend. Of those expecting to pursue further education, over half (52%) anticipated attending within a year. → See page 28.

Career Aspirations

- 74% of graduates were able to specify their career aspirations or goals to an identifiable occupation. 22% of respondents were unsure of their aspirations while 3% provided responses that could not be coded to an occupation. →See page 30.
- For those respondents who were able to identify their career aspirations, over half or 57% selected one of four occupational categories: Sciences, Engineering and Math (19%), Medicine and Health (16%), Teaching (12%) and Managerial and Administrative (10%). →See pages 30-31.
- Males and females tended to have different career interests. Males were more than 4 times as likely as females to aspire to occupations in Sciences, Engineering and Math while females were 4 times as likely to aspire to Medicine and Health related occupations and almost 3 times as likely to aspire to Teaching occupations. →See pages 31-32.
- Graduates who were not enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies were also more likely to be unsure of their career interests (18%) than those who continued their education (11%). →See page 30.
- 59% of graduates rated their chances of finding a job in their chosen career as very good or good. 25% rate their job chances as fair while 5% rated their chances as poor. Another 12% either didn't know or had not made any career decisions. →See page 32.

High School Experiences

- One-third of graduates (33%) reported that they had repeated one or more courses to improve their grade 12 average. Most (80%) did so in order to improve their chances of being accepted at a post-secondary institution. →See page 34.
- Combining school and work is the norm among recent high school students. Almost two-thirds (65%) were employed at some point during their last year of high school. Almost half or 49% worked 20 hours or more per week. Studies have suggested that this many hours of employment interferes with school work and school performance. →See page 35.
- Over one-third (34%) of graduates participated in work experience or work study courses while attending high school. Those who participated in such programs were more likely to be from areas outside the Edmonton and Calgary regions. They were also more likely to have grade 12 average marks of below 70% and to have general high school diplomas. →See page 36.

Views on Education and Jobs

- Most graduates (80%) believe that they need a post-secondary education in order to get a job. When asked for their views on the statement *"A post-secondary education offers me no guarantee of a job these days."*, 60% agreed while 13% disagreed. Another 27% were neutral. →See pages 38-39.
- Graduates were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement: *"The amount a student has to pay for continuing education is fair for the benefits he/she gets in return."* Only 22% of graduates agreed, another 34% were neutral while 44% disagreed. Given the uncertain job

market, perceptions of returns from further education have diminished from what they once were. Females were least likely to agree that the costs of post-secondary education were fair for the benefits in return, 17%. →See page 39.

- A growing proportion of the workforce is in non-standard employment which includes short-term and part-time jobs. Only 22% of graduates agreed that *"The job I'm likely to find will be part-time, temporary or contract instead of full-time, long-term and secure"*. →See page 40.
- 81% of graduates recognize the need for lifelong learning and agreed with the statement, *"The rapid pace of technological change means that I will need to keep upgrading my training throughout my working life."* Only 5% disagreed while 15% were neutral. →See page 41.
- Almost two-thirds of graduates agreed with the statement, *"Media reports of layoffs cause me concern about my own prospects."* →See page 42.

Suggested Changes to the Post-secondary System

- Almost two-thirds of graduates (63%) responded to an open-ended question on what change(s) they would suggest for the post-secondary system. Of the 63% who responded, almost half (47%) commented on the costs of further education. This included a majority of comments on the cost of tuition but also included concerns about financial aid, student loans, and the costs of textbooks, tutors and living expenses. Generally, the costs associated with further education, including tuition were perceived to be high and therefore a barrier to the pursuit of further education. →See pages 43-44.
- It is not clear whether graduates were aware that tuition fees accounted for roughly 21% of institutional operating costs in 1995 while the majority of the remaining 79% was contributed by taxes. Nevertheless, 45% of those who expressed concerns about costs were enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs.
- 27% of graduates raised issues on post-secondary courses or programs. Graduates who were sure of their program interests wanted the number of general courses to be reduced while those who were less sure of their interests wanted general courses to be expanded. Some graduates recommended that more practical hands-on experience and co-op programs be incorporated into the learning experience. →See pages 44-45.
- One-quarter of respondents indicated they needed assistance in making the transition from high school to a post-secondary institution. Graduates' concerns included the need for emotional growth, and the need to develop library, study and time management skills. Some reported that they needed help making decisions about programs or courses and many suggested that career counseling be improved. →See page 45.
- 19% of graduates commented on entrance requirements. Most suggested that the average grade requirement for entry be lowered so that more could attend. A smaller proportion wanted the minimum requirements raised in order to ensure that they can get a "quality education". →See page 47.
- 14% of graduates commented on teaching quality and grades. Large class sizes were perceived to lead to lower quality learning experiences, reduced teacher-student interaction and lower grades. Some graduates expressed dissatisfaction with grading on the bell curve. In their opinion, it failed to accurately reflect their achievements. →See pages 47-48.

1995 High School Survey

Introduction

Globalization and technological change are restructuring work. The educational requirements of many jobs have increased and the ability to learn and acquire new skills is crucial. Today, youth are being challenged to adapt to new ways of working. As they make multiple transitions between learning and working, their odds of finding a good job or rewarding career are now much more dependent on having a post-secondary education. At the same time, changes underway in the post-secondary system may be influencing student choices and behavior.

The 1995 High School Survey was undertaken to learn more about the behavior and attitudes of recent high school graduates. Approximately 80% of new students to universities are recent high school graduates, so their behavior and their education/career plans can heavily influence enrolment levels and program demand. The current survey is an update of a survey conducted in 1988. Much has changed since 1988 and given the recent concern over possible national declines in post-secondary enrolments, it is timely to survey recent high school graduates about their education and career plans.

By surveying at year end and early 1996, we were attempting to contact graduates at a critical point in their career paths. By this time many of the graduates would have started their post-secondary studies. The survey focuses on the enrolment behavior and motivations of recent high school graduates. How many continued their education directly from high school and what factors influenced the choices they made?

What are the activities of those who chose not to continue their education and how many intend to further their education?

This survey is one of a series of collaborative initiatives between Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development and Alberta Education to learn more about school-to-work transitions. A random sample of high school graduates was provided by Alberta Education while Advanced Education and Career Development developed the questionnaire, and conducted the survey mailout, followup and analysis of results. Due to their expertise in survey methodology, the Population Research Lab at the University of Alberta was contracted for some tasks, including a review of the survey methodology, a pretest of the questionnaire and the coding and data entry of the results for closed ended questions. Open-ended questions were coded and entered by Advanced Education and Career Development.

A second sample of recent grade 12 students was also drawn for analysis. This smaller sample consisted of students who were enrolled in grade 12 courses in 1995 and who successfully completed the requirements for university eligibility but did not receive a high school diploma. Clearly, these individuals qualify for and could contribute to the demand for post-secondary spaces. Unfortunately due to sampling difficulties, an analysis of the respondents from this sample was not feasible.

Methodology

In late November 1995, Alberta Education drew a random sample of 1,304 high school graduates from a graduating population of 25,293. These graduates would have received high school diplomas in 1995; most would have graduated in the spring of 1995. The sample was stratified by three main criteria: region, gender and eligibility for university.

University programs in Alberta have traditionally required at least a 60% average in some combination of courses. In this survey, graduates were divided into those eligible for university or not eligible based on whether they had an average grade of 60% or more in five appropriate high school courses.² While a 60% cut off for university eligibility may seem low, this would qualify graduates for programs at smaller universities and other degree-granting institutions in Alberta.

graduates were mailed a self-administered questionnaire. Respondents were assured of anonymity for this survey and were requested to fill out the questionnaire and mail it back to us. As well respondents were to fill out a reply card indicating that they had completed the survey and mailed it back to us separately. A follow-up reminder letter was mailed in February to respondents who had not returned reply cards in those strata where responses were below our targeted 50% response rate. Approximately one month later, respondents in the strata with the lowest response rates were followed up by telephone.

By May, 1996 a total of 705 questionnaires had been returned. After adjusting for those individuals we could not locate as well as deceased individuals, the overall response rate was 56%. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by 12 detailed strata.

On December 18th, 1995 the sample of

Table 1
Distribution of High School Graduate Population and Sample Respondents by Strata

Region	University Eligibility	Gender	Population		Sample Size		Respondents		Population & Resp Differ
			Number	percent	Original	Adjusted	Number	percent	
Edmonton Region (CD 11)	Eligible	Male	1,895	7.5	98	96	49	7.0	-0.5
	Eligible	Female	2,268	9.0	117	112	70	9.9	1.0
	Not eligible	Male	2,238	8.8	115	110	61	8.7	-0.2
	Not eligible	Female	2,371	9.4	122	116	64	9.1	-0.3
Calgary Region (CD 6)	Eligible	Male	1,565	6.2	81	80	48	6.8	0.6
	Eligible	Female	1,823	7.2	94	91	65	9.2	2.0
	Not eligible	Male	2,205	8.7	114	111	54	7.7	-1.1
	Not eligible	Female	2,272	9.0	117	114	59	8.4	-0.6
Other Alberta	Eligible	Male	1,417	5.6	73	71	41	5.8	0.2
	Eligible	Female	1,809	7.2	93	90	57	8.1	0.9
	Not eligible	Male	2,701	10.7	139	130	65	9.2	-1.5
	Not eligible	Female	2,729	10.8	141	133	72	10.2	-0.6
Total Number of high school graduates			25,293	100.0	1,304	1,254	705	100.0	

² In the 1990's, the minimum average needed to enter university for most programs has been higher than 60%. For the purpose of this study, to be considered eligible for university, candidates had to fall into one of two groups. They could have average grades of 60% or more in English 30 and Social Studies 30 plus passing grades in any four of the following: Math 30, Math 31, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, French 30, German 30, Latin 30, Russian 30, or Ukrainian 30. Alternatively, they could have English 30 plus any four of the following: Social Studies 30, Math 30, Math 31, Biology 30, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, French 30, German 30, Latin 30, Russian 30, or Ukrainian 30.

Sample Representativeness

With a total of 705 respondents, survey estimates are accurate within plus or minus 3.7 percent, 19 times out of 20. Survey estimates for subgroups such as males, females, those who met our eligibility criteria

for university and those who did not, are accurate to within plus or minus 5.0% to plus or minus 5.5%. Accuracy for regional estimates range from plus or minus 6.3% to plus or minus 6.5%.

Description of Sample

The characteristics of the respondents were checked against the actual population across all the three major strata, namely gender, region and eligibility for university. The characteristics of the sample respondents were found to be close to those of the actual population.

Table 2 shows the actual population and sample respondent proportions by the three strata used to draw the sample. The breakdown of respondents by gender was 45% male and 55% female. Compared to the population proportions, the sample slightly over-represents females by 2%. As for meeting the eligibility requirements for university, 47% of respondents were eligible and 53% were not. The sample over-represents those eligible for university by 4%. Finally, the regional distribution of the respondents was 35% from the Edmonton region, 32% from the Calgary region and 33% from other areas of the province.

These proportions were very close to the actual population proportions.

Overall, these differences are very slight and the distribution of the respondents by region, gender and eligibility for university are close to the actual population proportions. This means that the high school sample is representative of the population of high school graduates in 1995.

A calculation of respondents' ages was made based on information they provided on year of birth. This calculation corresponds roughly to age at the time of their high school graduation. The average age of respondents was 18.4 years. Ages ranged from a low of 16 to a high of 50. However, most graduates were young; 73% were between 16 to 18 years, and another 20% were 19 years of age, giving a total of 93% under 20 years of age.

Table 2
Comparison of Sample Respondents and Population by Stratification

Strata Criteria	Graduate Population		Sample Respondents		Difference
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Males	12,021	47.5	318	45.1	-2.4
Females	13,272	52.5	387	54.9	2.4
Eligible for University	10,777	42.6	330	46.8	4.2
Not Eligible for University	14,516	57.4	375	53.2	-4.2
CD 11 (Edmonton Region)	8,772	34.7	244	34.6	-0.1
CD 6 (Calgary Region)	7,865	31.1	226	32.1	1.0
Other Alberta	8,656	34.2	235	33.3	-0.9

Notes on Analysis

This report examines the enrolment status, career plans and attitudes of recent high school graduates towards education and jobs. Demographic, academic and family background factors were examined to see if these had an influence on the enrolment status of graduates. This allows us to answer questions such as whether factors including gender, region, academic performance and family background have an influence on the likelihood of continuing education.

Results from the 1995 survey will be compared with results from the 1988 survey where possible. This allows us to compare the enrolment behavior of recent graduates against an earlier cohort. Are there any differences in enrolment rates or in the motivations of graduates? In fact, many of the 1995 results are consistent with the 1988 results which also validates the current findings.

Throughout the report, relationships were examined for significance using the Chi square test of independence. Relationships were found to be statistically significant at the .05 level or less which gives a 95% confidence rate that the variables are

interdependent, or related, not due to chance.

Many of the relationships are also examined in more detail to see if they held for the three variables on which our sample was drawn: gender, eligibility for university and region. For example, when we control for gender, we separate respondents into 2 groups: males and females and then determined whether the relationship still held for males separately and for females separately. Controls for university eligibility and region were set up in a similar fashion.

Sometimes the overall or provincial results are significant but when controlled by the gender, region and university eligibility, the relationship is found to hold for only specific subgroups. This is the case with mothers' educational attainment which was found to have a significant influence on the likelihood of continuing education at the provincial level but when examined with controls for gender, region and eligibility for university, it held only for females and for Edmonton region respondents.

I. Participation in Further Education

As indicated in Table 3, participation in further education remains high among recent high school graduates in Alberta. Among high school graduates, 59% continued their education full-time in post-secondary studies directly out of high school. However, a larger proportion, or 70% were actually continuing their education since 3% were enrolled in post-secondary studies on a part-time basis and 9% had returned to high school.

Although this section of the report focuses on students who continued their education full-time in the adult learning system directly out of high school, it is recognized that some students continue their education in a more flexible, less traditional way. Recent research indicates that the transition between school and work is becoming longer and more complex with students alternating or combining periods of work and study. However a large proportion of students do continue their education directly out of high school. By focusing on these students we hope to learn how they make

decisions about participation in the adult learning system and how they choose institutions and programs.

Among high school graduates who continued their education full-time, the majority were enrolled in degree granting institutions, 49%. Another 41% were enrolled in colleges and technical institutes within the province (this includes the 5% in apprenticeship training). Six percent were enrolled in other institutions including Alberta Vocational Colleges, private vocational schools and religious colleges and institutes. Very few graduates chose to study outside of the province, 4%. Part-time post-secondary studies was the least popular choice with 3%.

Enrolment status among 1995 graduates is comparable to results from the 1988 survey, in which 72% of graduates continued their education. Of these, 58% were enrolled full-time in post-secondary institutions, 4% were enrolled on a part-time basis, while 10% had returned to high school.

Table 3
Enrolment Status of Respondents, 1988 & 1995

Enrollment Status	1988 #	1995 #	1988 %	1995 %
Total in school or Post-Secondary	564	496	72.3%	70.4%
Enrolled in Post-Sec full-time	452	413	57.9%	58.6%
Degree granting institutions*	199	200	44.9%	48.5%
College/Technical	174	146	39.3%	35.4%
Other institutions	32	26	7.2%	6.3%
Outside Alberta	38	18	8.6%	4.4%
Apprenticeship	n/a	22		5.3%
Total by Institution Type	443	412	100.0%	100.0%
Enrolled in Post-Sec part-time	31	23	4.0%	3.3%
In High School	81	60	10.4%	8.5%
Not Enrolled	205	209	26.3%	29.6%
Total number of respondents	780	705	780	705

NOTE: Totals by institution type will not add to the total enrolled in post-sec fulltime due to missing data.

* In 1995 degree granting institutions included universities, the Alberta College of Art & Design and private university colleges. In 1988 degree granting institutions included universities only with the rest reported in the colleges/technical institutes category.

Continuing Education Full-time Directly After High School

As might be expected, high school graduates who continued their education on a full-time basis directly after high school tended to have different characteristics than those who chose not to continue. The characteristics of respondents who continued their education full-time in a post-secondary institution or were taking apprenticeship training were compared to those of the remaining respondents. The following 10 demographic, academic and family background characteristics were examined: age group at high school graduation, gender, region, eligibility for university entrance, type of high school diploma, average grade 12 marks, whether older siblings attended, family encouragement, and parents' educational attainment. These characteristics were also examined while controlling for region, gender and university eligibility to see if there were any differences between subgroups.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents who continued their education full-time in post-secondary institutions by demographic characteristics including age group, gender and region.

Respondents were divided into 2 age groups: 16 to 18 years and 19 years or more at the time of their graduation. This separates younger graduates who completed high school in the usual length of time from those who took longer to graduate. In the current survey, age group was not found to be a significant indicator of the likelihood of continuing education. Continuation rates among older and younger graduates varied slightly, 54% compared to 61% but this difference

was not statistically significant. This finding is a departure from the 1988 survey which found that younger graduates were more likely to enroll, 62% compared to 44% of older graduates. The trend among high school students to combine work and study may have contributed to longer durations in high school. Two-thirds of graduates in the current survey worked while they were attending high school.

The relationship between age and continuing education was also examined separately for gender, region and university eligibility. In every case, age group was found not to be a significant indicator of continuing education.

Gender also was not a significant indicator of the likelihood of continuing education. Males were as likely as females to continue their education full-time, 56% and 60% respectively. Male and female rates from the previous survey were comparable, 55% and 60% respectively.

When controlling by region and university eligibility the survey found that university eligibility had an influence on continuing education for females. University eligible females participate at a higher rate than male university eligibles, (84% compared to 75%).

Table 4
Percent Continuing Education Full-time in Adult Learning
System by Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Factors	1988 HS Grads		1995 HS Grads	
	Continuing	Total n	Continuing	Total n
Age	s		ns	
16-18 years	61.7%	606	60.7%	507
19+ years	43.7%	158	53.7%	188
Gender	ns		ns	
Males	55.4%	359	56.3%	316
Females	60.1%	421	60.4%	389
Region Attended School	ns		s	
Edmonton region (CD 11)	53.8%	247	55.7%	244
Calgary region (CD 6)	62.9%	251	69.0%	226
Other Alberta	57.1%	282	51.5%	235

s: significant relationship between characteristic & continuing education .

ns: No significant relationship between characteristic & continuing education.

Region had an influence on the likelihood of continuing education. Graduates from the Calgary region were the most likely to continue their education (69%).³ This was followed by graduates from the Edmonton region (56%) while those least likely to continue their education were from other areas of the province (52%). Recent changes in enrolment criteria at the University of Calgary, which made it easier to qualify, may have contributed to the higher enrolment rates for Calgary respondents.

This is a departure from the results of the previous survey which found no significant difference in the rates of continuing education by region. Nevertheless, the 1988 results also showed that Calgary respondents were somewhat more likely to enroll (63% than respondents from other areas of Alberta 57% and Edmonton respondents 54%).

By 1995, the lower rate at which rural respondents continued their education compared to Edmonton and Calgary region respondents points to the possibility that graduates in rural areas may be experiencing difficulty in accessing further education. Rural respondents probably face more expenses if they need to move from home in order to participate in further education. We know that rural respondents were more likely to choose shorter programs; 58% chose colleges and technical institutes compared to 32% of Edmonton respondents and 27% of Calgary respondents. Furthermore, respondents enrolled in colleges and technical institutes (49%) were more likely than those attending other institutions to indicate that lower tuition fees influenced their choice of institution. Proximity to post-secondary institutions is discussed on page 15.

The influence of region was also examined by controlling for gender. Region had a significant influence on the likelihood of continuing education for females but not males. Calgary females (73%) were the most likely to enroll compared to females from Edmonton (56%) or Other Alberta (55%). Although not statistically significant, the same enrolment pattern was exhibited by Calgary males (65% enrolled compared to 56% of Edmonton males and 49% of males from Other Alberta). The 1988 survey found that region was a significant influence on enrolment among males; enrolment rates were Calgary 68%, Edmonton 51% and Other Alberta 49%).

When controlling for university eligibility, the influence of region was significant. Among those eligible for university, Calgary respondents, followed by Edmonton respondents and finally rural respondents enrolled at rates of 89%, 77% and 74% respectively. Even among respondents who did not meet the criteria for university eligibility, Calgary respondents were more likely to enroll (50% compared to Edmonton 35% and Other Alberta 36%).

The 1988 survey found that when controlling for region, more females than males in rural areas continue their education (64% to 49%). Although the current survey found no significant difference between female and male participation rates in rural Alberta, the enrolment pattern followed the same direction with a somewhat larger proportion of females enrolled than males (54% compared to 49% of rural males).

Academic Characteristics

Academic characteristics including eligibility for university, type of high school diploma and average grade 12 marks were examined to see if these had any influence on continuing education. Results from the current survey indicate that academic factors are the best predictors of continuing education. This was true of the previous survey. All three of the academic factors

³ Some of the difference between Calgary, Edmonton and the rest of the province may be due to a higher response rate from university eligible graduates in Calgary. The response rates of university eligible graduates were 66% for the Calgary region compared to 57% for Edmonton and 61% for other Alberta. The Alberta response rate for university eligibles was 61%.

influenced the likelihood of continuing education.

It's no surprise that graduates who met the eligibility criteria for university were more likely to continue full-time (80%) compared to those without (40%). Furthermore, this relationship also held when controlling for gender and region. The rates of continuing education from the 1988 survey were comparable (77% for university eligibles and 37% for non-eligibles).

Graduates with advanced diplomas⁴ were more likely to continue their education than those with general or other diplomas (74%

of continuing their education, 76% compared to only 43% of those with average marks of between 65% to 69% and 36% of those whose average marks were between 60% to 64%.

The relationship between high average marks and continuing education held for males and females, all regions and university eligibles. Among graduates who were not eligible for university, average grade 12 marks were not a good indicator of the likelihood of continuing education. Among these graduates, high marks of 70% or more resulted in only a 50-50 chance of enrolment for non-eligibles while it was up at 85% among

graduates who met the criteria for university eligibility.

Table 5
Percent Continuing Education Full-time in Adult Learning
System by Academic Characteristics

Academic Factors	1988 HS Grads		1995 HS Grads	
	Continuing	Total n	Continuing	Total n
University Eligibility:	s		s	
Eligible	77.1%	411	80.0%	330
Not eligible	36.6%	369	39.7%	375
Type of HS Diploma:	s		s	
General Diploma	32.6%	285	38.0%	300
Advanced Diploma	72.7%	491	73.5%	393
Average Grade 12 Marks:	s		s	
50-59%	33.9%	59	43.5%	46
60-64%	35.1%	154	36.0%	136
65-69%	45.5%	187	43.1%	153
70% +	78.6%	369	76.3%	359

s: significant relationship between characteristic & continuing education.

ns: No significant relationship between characteristic & continuing education.

compared to 38%). And both male and female respondents and respondents from all three regions who had advanced diplomas were more likely to enroll. The 1988 rates of enrolment were comparable at 73% among advanced diploma holders and 33% among general diploma holders.

The rates at which graduates continue their education tend to rise with average grade 12 marks. Those with average grade 12 marks of 70% or more had the greatest likelihood

Family Background Characteristics

Several family background indicators were examined to see if these had any influence on the likelihood of continuing education. These included whether respondents had older siblings who attended a post-secondary institution,

whether there was family encouragement for further education and the educational attainment of the parents. Results from the current survey found that all of these factors, except for fathers' education, were significant indicators of the likelihood of continuing education. These factors were all found to be significant indicators of continuing education in the 1988 survey.

Among graduates with siblings who attended post-secondary institutions, 63% had continued with their education compared to 42% of respondents whose siblings did not attend. Results from the earlier survey found comparable rates of 63% and 39%.

⁴ A general high school diploma requires 100 credits in English 30 or 33, French 30 and Social Studies 30 or 33. An advanced high school diploma is awarded if the requirements for a general diploma are satisfied in addition to credits in Math 30, and Chemistry 30, or Biology 30 or Physics 30.

When the relationship was examined by attainment of their mothers, but the relationship failed to hold with fathers' education. The proportion who continued their education full-time ranged from a low of 48% among those whose mothers' education was less than high school to a high of 72% among those whose mothers had completed university. The results by fathers' educational attainment were much less dramatic. By fathers' educational attainment, the proportion who continued their education ranged

Table 6
Percent Continuing Education Full-time in Adult Learning System
by Family Background Characteristic

Demographic Factors	1988 HS Grads		1995 HS Grads	
	Continuing	Total n	Continuing	Total n
Siblings Attended PS:	s		s	
Yes	63.0%	327	63.4%	290
No	38.8%	152	41.7%	120
Family Encouraged Further Ed:	s		s	
Yes	69.5%	476	69.8%	450
No	34.3%	216	37.4%	182
Don't Know/Maybe	54.5%	66	50.8%	59
Mothers' Education:	s		s	
Less than High School	47.7%	190	48.3%	87
High School Graduate	52.9%	157	55.7%	194
Some or Completed PS*	62.6%	278	57.7%	227
Univ Degree +	74.4%	121	72.2%	144
Fathers' Education:	s		ns	
Less than High School	47.9%	234	50.0%	132
High School Graduate	61.5%	96	57.8%	90
Some or Completed PS*	54.9%	235	59.1%	274
Univ Degree +	75.0%	176	66.0%	147

s: significant relationship between characteristic & continuing education.

ns: No significant relationship between characteristic & continuing education.

NOTE: * Some or completed PS excludes completed university.

region, gender and university eligibility, the survey found that siblings' attendance had no influence on the likelihood of continuing education among rural respondents and those eligible for university.

Graduates whose families encouraged post-secondary education were more likely to continue their education - 70% compared to 37% among respondents whose families did not encourage further education and 51% among respondents who didn't know or whose families may have encouraged education. Rates from the previous survey are comparable, 70%, 34% and 55% respectively.

The relationship between family encouragement and continuing education was also found to be significant when controlling for gender, region and university eligibility.

The educational attainment of one's parents had a mixed influence on the odds of further education. Current survey results indicate that the rates at which graduates continued their education rose with the educational

attainment of their mothers, but the relationship failed to hold with fathers' education. The proportion who continued their education full-time ranged from a low of 48% among those whose mothers' education was less than high school to a high of 72% among those whose mothers had completed university. The results by fathers' educational attainment were much less dramatic. By fathers' educational attainment, the proportion who continued their education ranged

from 50% amongst those whose fathers' had less than high school to 66% among those whose fathers' had a university education. This is a departure from the previous survey which found a strong relationship between parents' education and continuing education. Both mothers' and fathers' educational attainment was found to be a significant indicator of continuing education in 1988. Seventy-four percent of graduates whose mothers had university training continued their education and 75% of those whose fathers had university training continued their education (1988 survey).

When mothers' and fathers' education was controlled by gender, region and university eligibility, the relationships in both cases were significant only for females and Edmonton region respondents. Females whose mothers had higher levels of education were more likely to enroll, 44% of those whose mothers had less than high school compared to 78% of those whose mothers had completed university. Likewise, females whose fathers had university were

more likely to enroll. Enrolment rates for females progressed from 49% to 72% as fathers' educational levels rose from less than high school to completed university.

Among Edmonton region respondents the likelihood of continuing education rose with mothers' education: 35% of those whose mothers had less than high school, 54% of

those whose mothers had high school, 53% of those whose mothers had post-secondary and 74% of those whose mothers had university had enrolled. Similarly among Edmonton respondents the odds for enrolling rose from 41% to 74% as fathers' educational attainment rose from less than high school to university or more.

Location of Post-Secondary Institutions

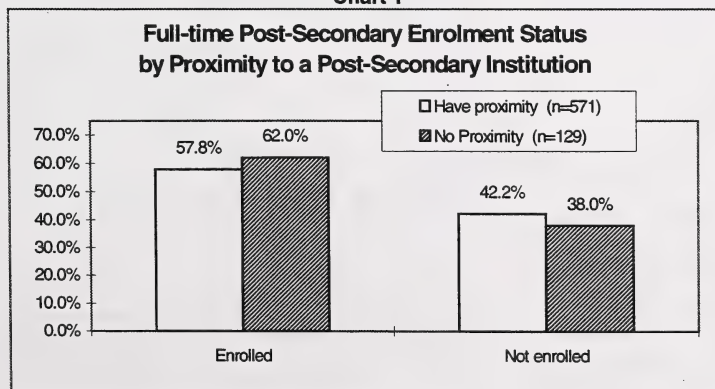
The lower rate of post-secondary enrolment among respondents in rural areas could be related to ease of access or location of post-secondary institutions. In this section we examined proximity to an institution to see if it was related to enrolment. Respondents were asked if there was a university, college or technical institute that they could attend without having to move away from their family home.

Most respondents (81%) indicated that they had access to a post-secondary institution without having to move from home. Only 18% did not have access to a post-secondary institution without having to relocate. As expected, in the Edmonton and Calgary regions, which cover Census Divisions 11 and 6, respondents are more likely to have proximity to a post-secondary institution. Respondents from other areas of the province are more likely to have to move away in order to attend, 38%. Only 12% of Edmonton and 6% of Calgary region

respondents did not have proximity to a post-secondary institution. It should be noted, however, that proximity to a post-secondary institution for rural respondents could include commuting to study rather than moving away from home.

When we examined proximity and enrolment status for all respondents we found that there was no relationship between location of institution and probability of enrolment. Overall, respondents who did not have proximity to a post-secondary institution did not have lower enrolment rates. They actually had slightly higher rates of enrolment, 62% versus 58% among those with proximity (this difference was not statistically significant). So although rural respondents are less likely to have proximity to a post-secondary institution in their home community, this made no difference to their probability of continuing education. In spite of this, rural respondents are more likely to choose colleges and technical institutes while Edmonton and Calgary region respondents were more likely to select degree granting institutions. This is not surprising since there are universities in the Edmonton and Calgary regions but not in more rural centers. Results from the 1988 survey also found that at the provincial level, proximity made no difference to the

Chart 1



probability of post-secondary enrolment. Likewise the previous survey found that Edmonton and Calgary region respondents

chose universities while respondents from Other Alberta chose colleges and technical institutes.

Respondents' Reasons for Continuing Education

Respondents were asked why they continued their education full-time directly after high school. Almost half indicated job or career reasons: to prepare for a career (28%) or to improve their job prospects (21%). Another 27% indicated an improved quality of life. These same three reasons were selected as most important by respondents regardless of gender, region, and eligibility for university.

The fourth most commonly selected reason for continuing education was enjoyment of learning (9%). For 5%, learning was preferred to working.

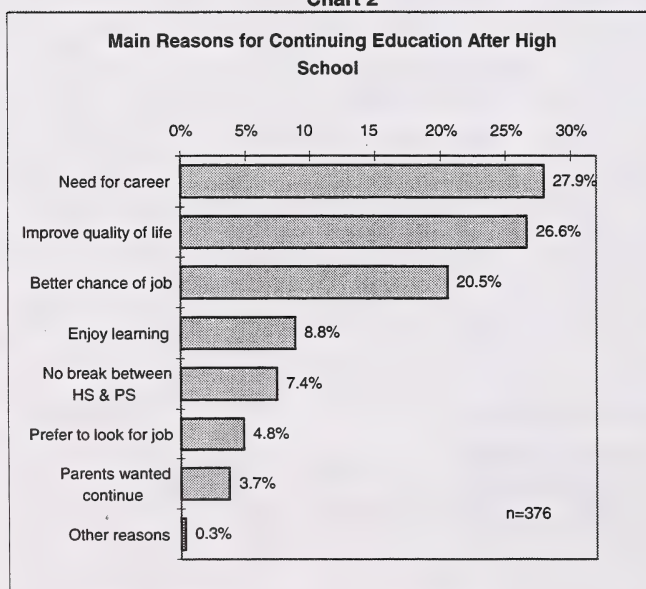
Career and job-related factors were also

found to be the main reasons for continuing education in the 1988 survey, 63%. Results are not directly comparable because improved quality of life was not available as a choice in the earlier survey.

Clearly, in the minds of most respondents further education contributes not only to better employment opportunities, but is also associated with a good life, a better future and success. There is also some recognition that despite the current job uncertainty, a post-secondary education still provides employment prospects that would not otherwise be available to them. The following comments from respondents offer some insights into their views on the education and labour market link: "To get a

well paying job today without post-secondary education is hard to do," and "In today's society you need a university education even to get the low paying jobs".

Chart 2



II. Institutions and Programs

Institutions

This section looks at respondents who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary institutions and examines the factors which influence their choice of institution and program of study. Excluded from the analysis are those taking apprenticeship training since apprentices do not get to choose their institution or program.⁵ Chart 3 shows the type of post-secondary institutions chosen by respondents who were enrolled full-time. Degree granting institutions were the most popular choice for the majority - 51%. Degree granting institutions include the University of Alberta, The University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge and private colleges with degree granting programs including King's University College, Augustana University College, Concordia College and The Alberta College of Art and Design. The majority enrolled in degree granting institutions were attending universities (92%).

The second most popular choice - 37% of high school graduates - were colleges and technical institutes, which includes all public colleges and the Northern Alberta Institute of

Technology (NAIT) and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). Of this group, 70% were at public colleges while 30% were at NAIT and SAIT.

Respondents were less likely to have chosen other institutions which includes Alberta vocational colleges, private vocational schools and religious colleges and institutes (7%). The least likely choice was institutions outside of the province (5%).

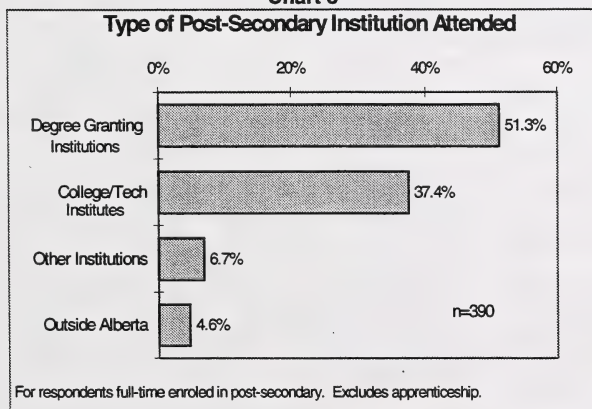
These findings are similar to the 1988 results which also indicated that universities, followed by colleges and technical institutes, were the main choices for further education among high school graduates (45% and 39% respectively). However previous results are not directly comparable because of slight differences in the grouping of the institutions.

Among the minority who were enrolled outside of the province, most, or 83% attended institutions in other provinces while 17% were enrolled in institutions in the United States. Within Canada, the most popular choices were institutions in Ontario and British Columbia. Among those enrolled outside of the province, over 80% were attending universities.

Demographic characteristics of respondents including age group, gender and region were examined to see if these had any influence on choice of institution. As indicated in Table 7, all of these demographic characteristics were found to have a significant influence on choice of institution, with the exception of gender. The proportion of males and females

enrolled in degree granting institutions was roughly equal at 52% and 51% respectively. While there were differences between males and females in the proportions enrolled in colleges and technical institutes and in other

Chart 3
Type of Post-Secondary Institution Attended



⁵ Instead apprentices receive 80% of their training on the job while the remaining 20% is formal instruction arranged between the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development and the training establishment.

institutions or institutions outside of the province, these differences were not statistically significant. Gender was also found not to be related to type of institution in the 1988 survey (49% of males and 42% of females had enrolled in universities).

Age and region were found to be related to type of post-secondary institution attended.

respondents to choose degree granting institutions more often than older respondents was also found to be true for males, females, university eligibles and respondents from all 3 regions.

Graduates who attended high school in either the Edmonton or Calgary regions were more likely to select degree granting

institutions than were graduates from other areas of the province, 59% and 60% respectively compared to 32% of graduates from other areas. Instead, respondents from rural areas were much more likely to select colleges or technical institutes (58%). Again, this same trend was true of the 1988 survey. The proportions of graduates from the Edmonton and Calgary regions who enrolled in university (50% and 58%) were

much higher than the rate for graduates from other areas of the province (27%).

The tendency for graduates from the Edmonton and Calgary regions to enroll in degree granting institutions at much higher rates than respondents from rural areas also held for males, females, those eligible for university and those not eligible for university.

Academic characteristics (eligibility for university, type of high school diploma and average grade 12 marks) were all found to have a significant influence on the type of institution chosen. As indicated in Table 7, academically inclined graduates were more

Table 7

Choice of Post-Secondary Institution By Demographic & Academic Characteristics

Characteristics	Degree Granting Institutions	Colleges / Technical Institutes	Other Instns & Outside Alberta	Number of respondents
Gender:				
Male	51.6%	40.3%	8.2%	159 ns
Female	51.1%	35.5%	13.4%	231
Age:				
16-18 yrs	57.7%	32.4%	9.9%	293 s
19+ yrs	32.3%	51.6%	16.1%	93
Region:				
Edmonton region (CD 11)	58.6%	32.0%	9.4%	128 s
Calgary region (CD 6)	59.6%	27.2%	13.2%	151
Other Alberta	31.5%	57.7%	10.8%	111
Eligibility for University:				
Eligible for university	65.5%	24.2%	10.2%	264 s
Not eligible for university	21.4%	65.1%	13.5%	126
Type of high school diploma:				
General Diploma	10.8%	71.0%	18.3%	93 s
Advanced Diploma	64.5%	27.5%	8.0%	287
Average Grade 12 marks:				
50-64%	7.3%	74.5%	18.2%	55 s
65-69%	34.4%	54.7%	10.9%	64
70% +	64.9%	25.0%	10.1%	268

s: significant relationship between characteristic and type of post-secondary institution.

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic and type of post-secondary institution.

In terms of age groups, graduates between 16 and 18 years of age were more likely to select degree-granting institutions, 58% compared to 32% of those aged 19 years or more. Older graduates were more likely to select public colleges or technical institutes, 52%. Results from 1988 indicate a similar trend, with youth more likely to choose universities (49%) and older students more likely to enroll in colleges or technical institutes (55%).

Type of institution attended was also examined by controlling for gender, region and university eligibility. This analysis is based on collapsing institutions into 2 groups: degree granting and all other institutions. The tendency for younger

likely to have enrolled in degree granting institutions. The relationship between academic characteristics and choice of institution mirror results from the 1988 survey which found that more academically inclined graduates chose universities.

opt for colleges and technical institutes (71%).

Academic characteristics were examined separately for males and females, for each region and for university eligibles and non eligibles. Type of institution chosen was

found to be related to academic characteristics for all subgroups.

Finally, family background characteristics were examined to see if these were related to institutional choices. These included family encouragement, whether siblings attended and parents' educational attainment. Family encouragement and whether older siblings attended were not related to choice of institution (the same

was found in the 1988 survey). Once the decision was made to enroll in further education, these factors had no effect on choice of institution.

However, the educational attainment of parents was found to be related to choice of institution. As the educational attainment of parents increased, so did the likelihood of enrolment in degree-granting institutions. Enrolment in degree-granting institutions rose from 43% among those whose mothers had high school or less to 56% among those whose mothers had post-secondary to 61% amongst those whose mothers had university. The same pattern was shown with fathers' educational attainment. The 1988 survey results also found that parents' educational attainment influenced institutional choices.

Table 8
Choice of Post-Secondary Institution by Family Characteristics, 1995

Characteristics	Degree Granting Institutions	Colleges / Technical Institutes	Other Instns & Outside Alberta	Number of respondents
Family encouraged post-secondary enrolment:				
Family encouraged	52.5%	37.4%	10.2%	305 ns
Family did not encourage	40.4%	43.9%	15.8%	57
Don't know/Maybe	59.3%	25.9%	14.8%	27
Whether older siblings attended post-secondary:				
Siblings attended post-sec	51.7%	32.0%	16.3%	178 ns
Siblings did not attend	46.2%	43.6%	10.3%	39
Mothers' educational attainment:				
HS or less	42.6%	463.0%	11.0%	136 s
Some or completed PS*	56.0%	36.0%	8.0%	125
Univ Degree/+	60.6%	24.0%	15.4%	104
Fathers' educational attainment:				
HS or less	46.8%	44.1%	9.0%	111 s
Some or completed PS*	49.3%	36.8%	13.8%	152
Univ Degree/+	64.2%	24.2%	11.6%	95

s: significant relationship between characteristic and type of post-secondary institution.

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic and type of post-secondary institution.

NOTE: *Some or completed PS excludes university completion.

As would be expected, those who successfully met the criteria for university eligibility were more likely to enroll in degree granting institutions, 66% compared to 21% of graduates who had not met the criteria.⁶ Likewise, those with higher grade 12 averages were more likely to select degree granting institutions, 65% of those with at least a 70% average compared to 34% of those whose averages were 65% to 69% and 7% of those whose averages were between 50% and 64%. And finally, as would be expected, 65% of the 1995 respondents who had advanced high school diplomas had enrolled in degree granting institutions compared to 11% of those who had general diplomas. Instead, respondents with general diplomas were more likely to

⁶ It is possible for respondents who do not meet our university eligibility criteria to be enrolled in university because they can qualify for specific programs in certain faculties that have less stringent requirements.

When controlling by gender, region and university eligibility, the educational attainment of the parents was not related to the likelihood of enrolment in degree granting institutions. The only subgroup where this did not hold was among males,

where fathers' education had a significant influence on the choice of institution. Males whose fathers were university trained were more likely to be enrolled in degree granting institutions (70%).

Respondents' Reasons for *Institution Choice*

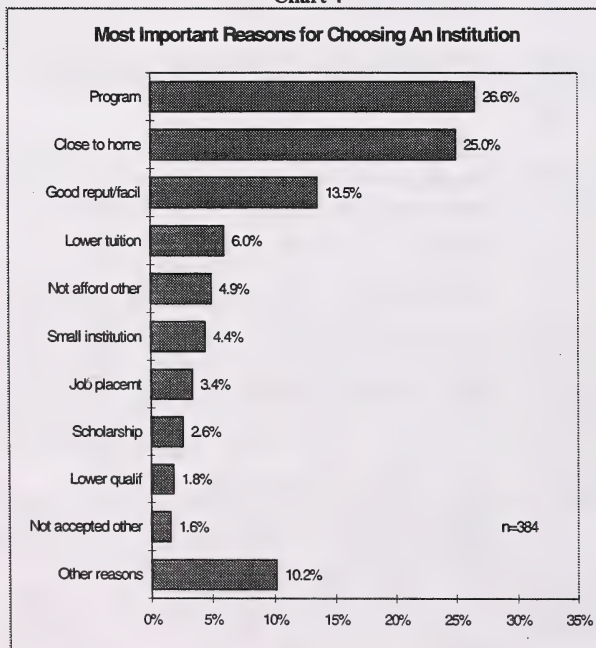
Respondents were also asked to identify from a list of 15 factors the one that was most important in their choice of an institution. Chart 4 shows the percentage distribution of the main factors that were selected by respondents as being most important in their choice. The three most important factors chosen by 65% of high school graduates were program (27%) followed closely by proximity to home (25%) and thirdly, the reputation and facilities of the institution (14%). These same three factors were also selected by 68% of the 1988 respondents as being most important in their choice of an institution.

Ten percent of respondents indicated that other reasons were most important in their choice of an institution. This included a

variety of factors such as wishes of parents, recommendations from previous students, smaller class sizes, various athletics programs, whether friends were attending and advice from teachers.

The reasons selected as most important to institution choice were also examined to see if there were any differences in terms of demographic and academic characteristics. When these characteristics were examined we found that most respondents selected the same three reasons identified earlier: program, proximity to home, and reputation and facilities. This was also true when controlling by gender, region, and eligibility for university. For respondents aged 19 years or more, those with general diplomas and those with grade 12 average marks of 50% to 69%, lower tuition fees replaced reputation and facilities as most important.

Chart 4



Type of post-secondary institution attended was also examined to see if respondents had different reasons for choosing different institutions. Among respondents who were enrolled full-time in degree granting institutions, the most important factors were proximity to home (38%) followed by reputation or facilities (17%) and program (17%). Among those attending public colleges or technical institutes the most important factors were program (36%), followed by proximity to home (15%) and lower tuition fees (14%). Among respondents who attended other institutions or attended outside of province, the most important

reason for their choice was program (40%).

By comparing the main factors respondents identified as being most important in their choice of institution, we can see how some of the recent changes in post-secondary institutions may have influenced the behavior of recent high school students.

The increase in tuition fees at Alberta post-secondary institutions appears to have had

an impact on some students with 6% of the 1995 respondents indicating that lower tuition fees was the most important factor in their choice of an institution, up from 1% among the 1988 respondents. The proportion of respondents who chose an institution based on its reputation or facilities was down at 14% compared to 21% among the 1988 respondents.

Respondents' Reasons for Program Choice

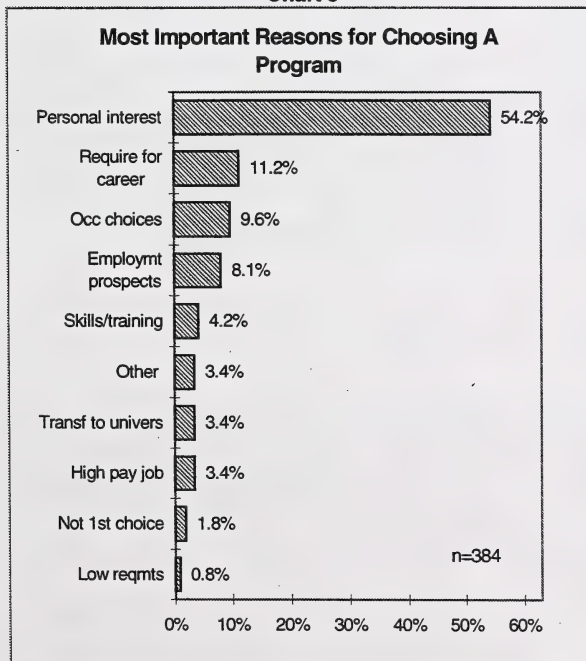
Respondents were asked to select from a list of factors the one which was most important in choosing their current program of study. Chart 5 shows the percentage distribution of the factors selected by respondents as being most important in their choice of a program. Personal interest was by far the most important factor; 54% of those full-time enrolled in post-secondary based their current program choice on personal interest. This compares to 46% found in the 1988 survey.

The next largest category of factors selected as most important in deciding upon a program of study were career related. For example, 21% of graduates selected career reasons as important to their program choice: it prepared them for the career they were interested in (11%) or prepared them for a range of occupations (10%). Program choices based mainly on personal interest or for career preparation may not necessarily coincide with the types of job opportunities expected to be available after graduation. Only 12% of respondents selected their programs for employment related reasons: good employment prospects (8%) or to get a high paying job (3%).

Almost no respondents selected low academic requirements as most important to their current program choice. Three percent of graduates selected other reasons as most important. This included respondents who indicated that they were uncertain about their career interests or what program to take.

Characteristics such as age group, gender, region, eligibility for university and type of post-secondary institution attended were also examined for the most important factors in choosing a program of study. The survey found that for all respondents, personal interest was consistently selected most often as the key factor, followed by job or career related factors.

Chart 5



These results indicate that most of the respondents enrolled full-time in post-secondary institutions were in the programs of their choice. Only 2% of high school

graduates indicated that the most important factor affecting their choice of institution was that they could not get into the program that was their first choice.

Eligibility Requirements for Degree Granting Institutions

Differing eligibility requirements at various degree-granting institutions may have influenced the participation rates and institutional choices of graduates. Eligibility requirements have historically been more stringent for degree-granting institutions compared to colleges. However, even among degree-granting institutions, eligibility criteria differ. Universities and colleges also actively competed for students for the 1995/96 year. This was in response to new funding rules which required that institutions maintain enrolments levels to within two percent of 1993-94 levels or face funding cuts. Various university initiatives included advertising for students as well as changes to admission requirements and extended deadlines for applications. At The University of Calgary, students with a 65% high school average were guaranteed admission to non-quota faculties. At the University of Alberta, grade point average admission standards were reduced in various faculties including science, education, agriculture, physical education and recreation. The required admission grade did not drop below 70% at the University of Alberta. As a result of these changes, eligibility requirements at the University of Alberta were more stringent while eligibility at the U of C may have been

easier to meet. According to The University of Calgary, there were an additional 600 new registrations in the fall of 1995 as a result of recruitment efforts.

Eligibility criteria for private colleges with degree-granting programs such as Augustana University College and Concordia College tended to be less stringent than the universities. Furthermore, some of these private institutions had flexible acceptance policies. Augustana and Concordia College admit students who do not meet entrance requirements on the understanding that they will make up for these deficiencies in their first semester.

In our analysis, graduates were separated into those eligible and not eligible for university on the basis of whether they attained a minimum 60% average in the appropriate courses. This criteria is the minimum requirement for general admission to university programs. In addition each university faculty has its own specific admission requirements and have historically given preference to candidates with the best qualifications whenever demand exceeds spaces available.

Multiple Applications

Increased access to adult learning opportunities is a key strategy of Advanced Education and Career Development's business plan. Access to the system and demand by program have not been easy to measure because some individuals make multiple applications to institutions and/or programs.

The Duplicate Application Detection Project estimates that approximately 14% of applicants to Alberta's adult learning institutions generated 28% of applications in September 1995.

Institutions

Respondents who were enrolled in the post-secondary system full-time were also asked if they had applied to more than one institution and program of study. Among the 1995 respondents the frequency of applications to more than one institution was 33% compared to that found in the 1988 survey, 29%.

When demographic and academic characteristics such as sex, age group, region, type of high school diploma, and eligibility for university were examined the survey found that there were no significant

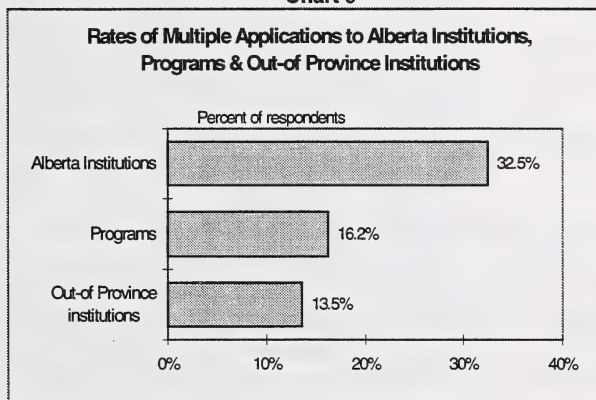
of Edmonton and 23% of Calgary respondents.

Programs

The 1995 rate of multiple program applications made by respondents who were enrolled full-time in the post-secondary system was 16%, comparable to the 1988 survey rate of 15%.

The only characteristic that was found to have a significant influence on the frequency of multiple program applications was region. Graduates from the Edmonton region were most likely to have applied to more than one program (26% compared to 11% of Calgary and 12% of rural Alberta respondents). The 1988 survey failed to find any significant differences in the rates of multiple program applications by region. In that survey the incidence of multiple program applications was higher among respondents in the Edmonton and rural Alberta regions (16% and 19%) compared to Calgary region respondents (10%).

Chart 6



differences in the rates of multiple applications to institutions based on these characteristics. However, grade 12 marks were significant: respondents with lower average marks were more likely to have made applications to more than one institution (40% compared to 29% of those whose grades averaged 70% or more). This makes sense since more applications could increase the odds of being accepted.

Furthermore, the rate of multiple institutional applications was somewhat higher for rural Alberta (36% compared to 31% of respondents in the Edmonton and Calgary regions), but the differences were not found to be significant. The previous survey found that rural respondents (37%) were significantly more likely to make multiple applications to institutions, compared to 26%

Institutions Outside of Alberta

The 1995 survey also asked respondents who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies if they had applied to an institution outside of Alberta. The proportion of respondents who made at least one external application was low (14%). This is lower than the rate for multiple applications to institutions or programs within the province. Respondents who made external applications were more likely to be from the Edmonton or Calgary regions and were more academically inclined. In-province institutions seem to be chosen by a majority of the 1995 respondents; less than 5% enrolled in institutions outside of Alberta.

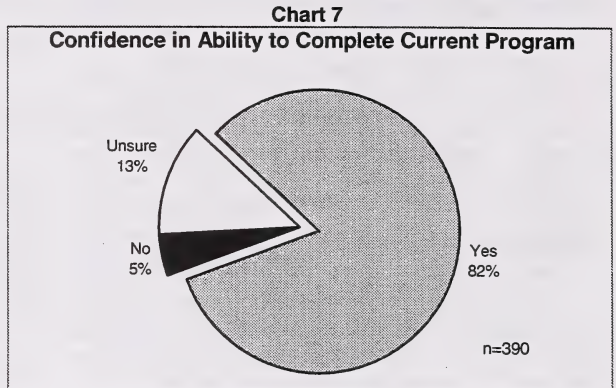
In future, student mobility in Canada may be reduced as a result of residency requirements for financial aid.

Confidence in Ability to Complete Program

Respondents who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary institutions were asked if they were confident that they would finish the program of studies they were currently enrolled in. Over 80% of graduates indicated that they would finish their programs while 13% were unsure and 5% indicated that they would not be completing their program.

Among the small minority (5%) who indicated that they would not be completing their current programs, most were not expecting to terminate their studies. Most were planning to change their program or institution or make changes to their career plans. Very few indicated that they had lost interest in the programs they were enrolled in.

For those respondents confident of completing their programs, the average length of time expected to complete was calculated. On average, the time expected for program completion was 4.8 years for those enrolled in degree granting institutions



and 2.9 years for those enrolled in colleges and technical institutes. Those enrolled in all other institutions anticipated a 2.7 year average completion period. Average program completion times were longer than expected for respondents enrolled in degree granting institutions because some respondents intended to pursue their education beyond the bachelor degree level. For those enrolled in colleges and technical institutes, average program completion times were higher than expected due to students in university transfer programs.

Importance of Work Related to Studies

A large proportion of respondents also rated it important to very important that their future employment be related to their chosen program of studies (78%). An examination of characteristics including gender, age group, region, average grade 12 marks, type of diploma and eligibility for university indicates that a large proportion of all respondents rated related employment as important. By institution, respondents who were enrolled in colleges and technical institutes were more likely to have rated related employment as important (84%). This was followed by 76% of those enrolled

in degree granting institutions and 65% of those enrolled in all other institutions.

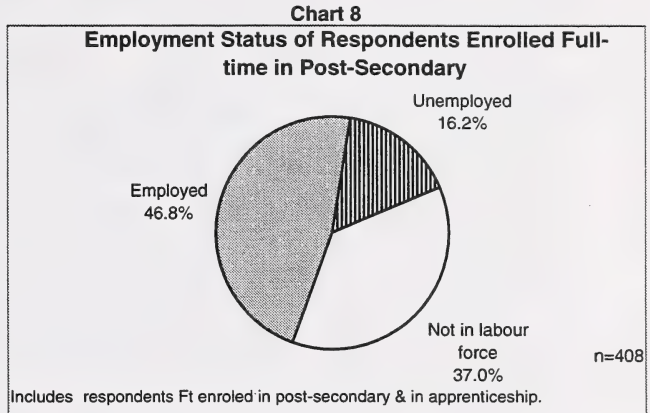
It is interesting that related employment has been rated as important overall by such a large proportion of respondents, since over half indicated that personal interest was the most important factor in their choice of the program they were enrolled in. Employment prospects was the main factor for a much smaller proportion (12%). Obviously many respondents either hope or expect that their chosen programs of study will coincide with a related job in the future.

Employment Status

As indicated in Chart 8, a majority of those enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies or taking apprenticeship training had combined work and study at some point during their studies. A surprisingly high 63% were participating in the labour force at the time of the survey. Of respondents, 47% were employed while another 16% were looking for work. This leaves only 37% of respondents who had never combined work with studies. Rural respondents (33%) were less likely than Edmonton (53%) and Calgary region (53%) respondents to have combined work and study.

Overall, respondents who were employed, averaged 17.6 hours of paid work per week. The majority (85%) held part-time jobs of less than 30 hours per

week, while 15% held full-time jobs of 30 hours or more per week. Part-time workers averaged 14.8 hours per week while full-time workers averaged 38.3 hours per week.



Financing of Post-Secondary Education

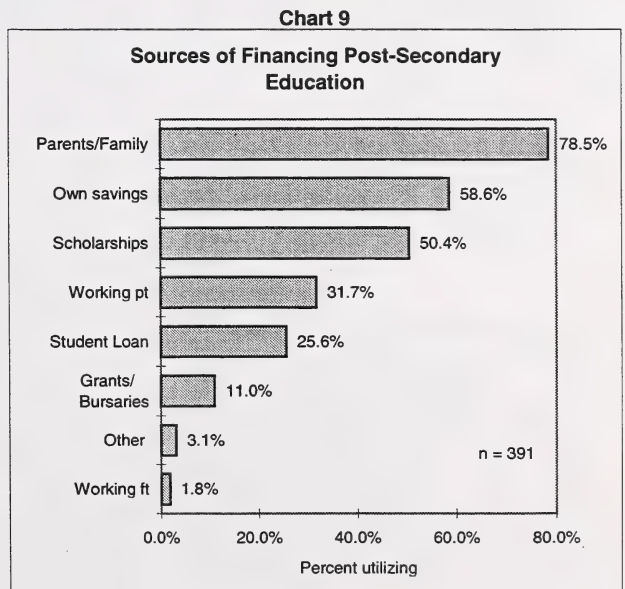
Respondents were asked how they financed the costs of their education and living expenses. Chart 9 shows all the sources of financing used by those enrolled full-time in post-secondary and the percentage of respondents utilizing them. In the majority of cases, each respondent relied on a combination of several funding sources.

The sources most often used were personal and included parents or family, 79% and own savings, 59%. One-third used their own employment earnings, mostly from part-time work. Half of respondents used scholarships compared to the previous survey, 45%.

One-quarter of respondents accessed student loans, a lower rate than found in the previous survey, 32%. However, current survey results on student loans appear to be consistent with the Student Finance Board's Annual Report for 1995 which indicated that 28% of need-based

student loans were granted to students who were aged 21 or less in 1994/95.

The most frequently used sources of



financing were also examined by gender, region and university eligibility to see if there were any variations in usage between these subgroups. Parents or family support was an important source of post-secondary financing for all respondents regardless of gender, region and eligibility for university.

There were regional differences in the sources of financing used. Rural respondents were more likely (68%) to use their own savings than respondents from the Edmonton (47%) or Calgary regions (62%). Rural respondents were also more likely to rely on student loans (33%), compared to Edmonton (27%) and Calgary (19%) region respondents. However, respondents from the Edmonton and Calgary regions were more likely to rely on part-time employment (33% and 38% compared to rural respondents 22%).

The only financing source in which there was a gender difference was in the use of savings to finance post-secondary studies. Males (65%) were more likely than females (54%) to rely on savings.

The use of savings, scholarships, and student loans varied by university eligibility. Respondents who were eligible for university were more likely to use their own savings (63% compared to 50% of non-eligibles). Scholarships which are usually awarded on academic standing, were used at a much higher rate by those eligible for university (64% compared to 23% among non-eligibles). Respondents who were not eligible for university were more likely to use student loans (33% compared to 22% of university eligible respondents).

III. Graduates Not Continuing Full-time in Post-Secondary Institutions

Reasons for Not Continuing Education

This section contains an analysis of those graduates who did not continue their education full-time in the adult learning system directly after high school. The current survey found that 41% of respondents were not enrolled full-time (the 1988 survey results are comparable, 42%). Although not enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies, some of these individuals were enrolled elsewhere - 8% were enrolled on a part-time basis and 20% had returned to high school. Most (72%) were not enrolled at all.

Edmonton respondents were more likely than respondents from other areas to return to high school, 36% compared to 12% among Calgary respondents and 16% among rural respondents. This is perhaps due to more stringent entrance requirements at the University of Alberta. Males were also

more likely than females to return to high school, 28% compared to 17%. As well, younger respondents were more likely to return to high school (29% among those less than 19 years of age compared to 7% of those who were older).

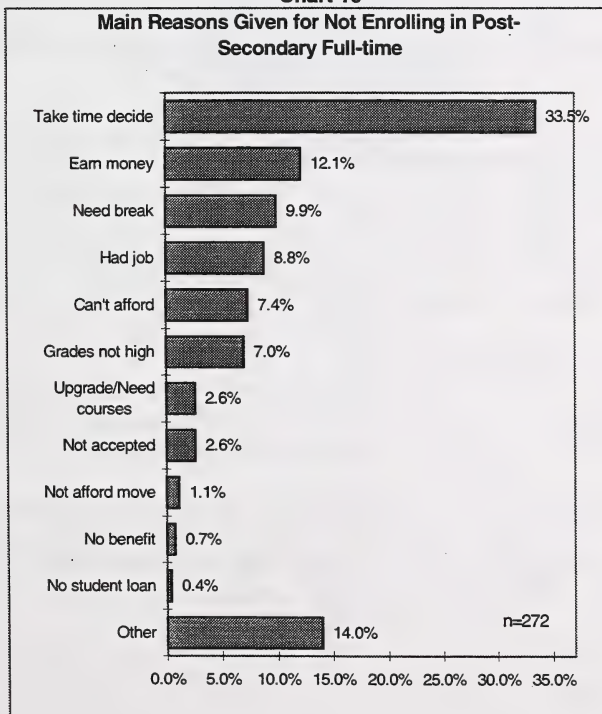
Respondents who were not enrolled were asked to select from a list of 11 factors, the one that was most important in their decision not to continue their education in the adult learning system. Chart 10 shows that over one-third (34%) of respondents appeared to be undecided about further education and indicated that they were taking time to decide what to do. With the increase in tuition fees and the uncertain job market, it may not be surprising that many students are spending more time considering their future. However, there is evidence that some respondents were floundering; they were unsure of their education/career interests and had not decided to continue in post-secondary studies. Respondents who were not enrolled full-time in post-secondary were more likely to be unsure of their career interests (18%) than those who continued their education (11%).

By combining some of the factors that are similar we find that almost 21% of respondents selected work as a reason for not enrolling (12% wanted to earn money while 9% already had jobs).

Almost 19% of respondents were unable to further their education in post-secondary institutions. Of this, 7% indicated that their grades were not high enough and 3% were not accepted by the institution that they had applied to. Financial constraints were a factor for 7% who indicated that neither they nor their families could afford

Chart 10

Main Reasons Given for Not Enrolling in Post-Secondary Full-time



the cost of further education, 1% couldn't afford to move away from home to attend, and less than 1% were unable to get a student loan.

Finally, 14% of respondents gave a variety of other reasons for not continuing full-time in post-secondary studies. This included taking time off for travel, going on religious missions and meeting family commitments.

Results from the 1988 survey are not directly comparable to the 1995 results due to changes in the response categories that respondents could select from. The 1988

survey did not provide "taking time to decide what to do" as an option.

If we examine the academic characteristics of graduates who chose not to continue their education in post-secondary institutions, we find that a sizable portion could have gone on to further education. Over one-third or 35% had advanced high school diplomas. In terms of grade 12 marks, slightly less than one-third (31%) had marks of 70% or more. Finally, in terms of meeting our criteria for university eligibility, 23% could have qualified for university programs.

Plans for Further Education

Almost all respondents believed in the value of further education. A large proportion of those who did not enter into full-time post-secondary studies directly from high school were planning to attend on a full-time basis in the future. Over half (56%) indicated that they were definitely going to pursue further education, while another 26% indicated that they would probably attend, giving an overall 82% rate for possible future participation in the adult learning system.

An examination was made of the characteristics of respondents who reported that they would definitely or probably attend post-secondary institutions in the future. While rates for all respondents were very high, those who were younger, 16 to 18 years at their graduation were more likely to

have indicated that they would definitely or probably enroll, 87% versus 72% of those aged 19 years or more. No statistically significant relationship was found between future enrolment plans and gender or region.

As expected, respondents who performed better academically and had higher average grades or succeeded at meeting our criteria for university eligibility were also more likely to have future enrolment plans.

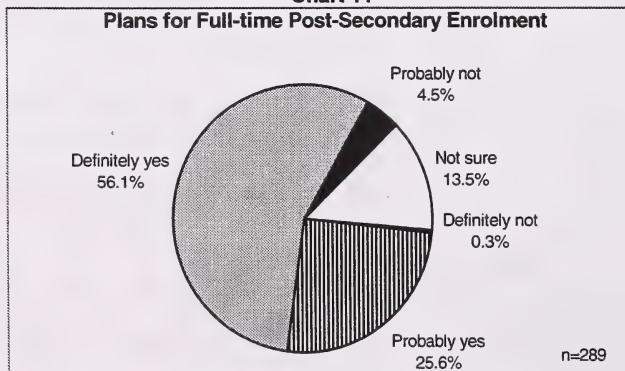
Those who indicated that they would be attending were asked how soon after high school completion they would expect to attend. Over half (52%) said within one year and another 37% said within three years. A minority of respondents indicated a longer period: 6% within 5 years, 1% after 5 years and 5% were unsure of the time.

As a proportion of all survey respondents, those who intend to enrol in post-secondary studies within one year represent 17%.

Only 5% of graduates indicated that they were not planning to further their education, while 14% were unsure of their post-secondary plans.

Chart 11

Plans for Full-time Post-Secondary Enrolment



Employment Status

Most high school graduates who were not enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies were actively participating in the labour force at the time of the survey. Most (79%) were employed, while another 16% were unemployed and looking for work. With this 95% participation rate in the labour force, this group had much higher involvement in working than did respondents who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies.

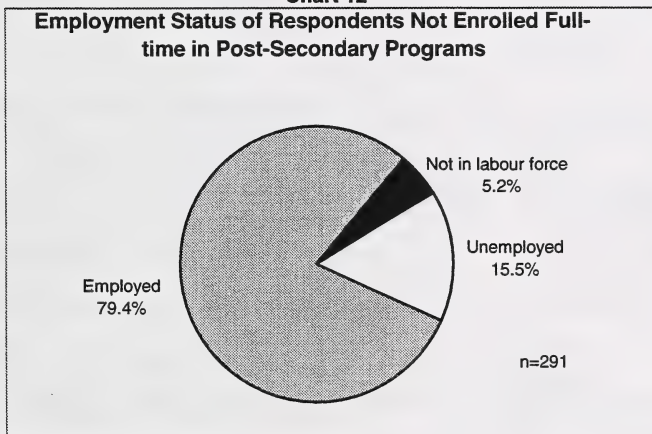
Only 5% were not employed and not looking for work. Likewise, the previous survey found that a majority (74%) of graduates

who were not enrolled full-time in post-secondary studies were employed.

Employed respondents who were not enrolled in post-secondary programs worked on average 33.6 hours per week. By examining the usual hours of work, we find that two-thirds (66%) held full-time jobs of at least 30 hours per week, while one-third (34%) were in part-time jobs. Those who were employed full-time, averaged 41.3 hours per week compared to part-timers who averaged 18.3 hours per week.

Chart 12

Employment Status of Respondents Not Enrolled Full-time in Post-Secondary Programs



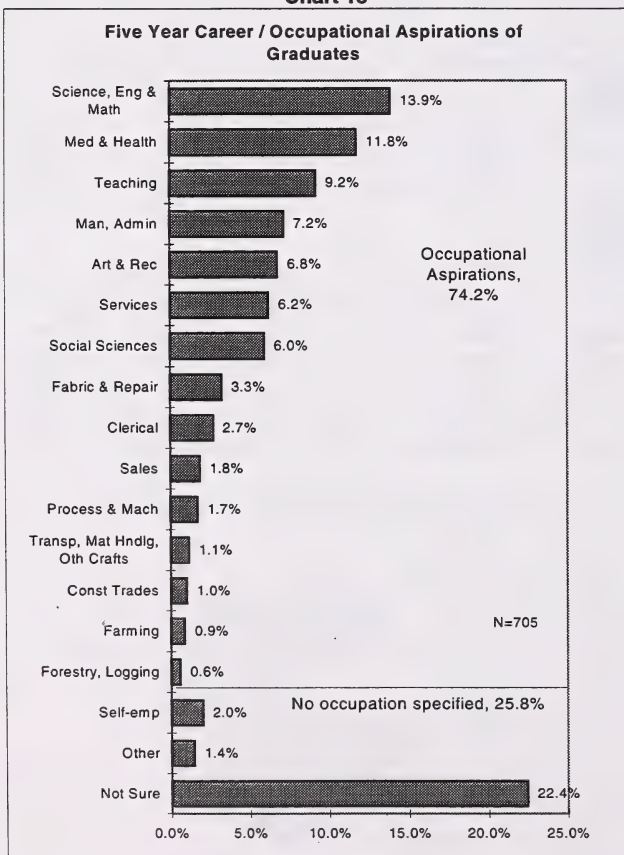
IV. Career Aspirations

All respondents were asked if they knew what career or occupation they hoped to attain in 5 year's time. A majority (80%) indicated that they had some idea. This includes 25% who were definite about their plans, 33% who indicated that they knew more or less and 23% who were considering. Another 5% expected to still be students while 14% were unsure of their career or occupational interests. However, when it came to identifying what that career or occupation was, only three-quarters (74%) were able to identify a specific career or occupation. Another 3% gave answers that included self-employment or were so vague that they could not be coded to an occupation. This included responses such as "working for a large corporation",

"working with people" or "working outdoors". Twenty-two percent of respondents were not sure what career they wanted. (Results from the 1988 survey indicated that only 65% of respondents had specific occupational aspirations while 11% had goals that were not codeable to an occupational category and 24% were undecided about a career).

All respondents who provided either occupational titles or career areas were coded to occupational codes according to the Standard Occupational Classification System at an aggregated level of detail. Chart 13 shows the distribution of occupational aspirations for high school graduates.

Chart 13



Characteristics such as gender, region, average grade 12 marks, type of high school diploma and eligibility for university were examined for those respondents who indicated that they knew what their career/occupational aspirations were compared to those who were unsure. None of these characteristics were found to be related to the likelihood of career indecision. However, those who had enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs were less likely to indicate career indecision - 11% compared to 18% of those not enrolled.

Table 9 shows the distribution of occupations for all graduates who provided career aspirations information that was specific enough to be coded to an occupation. Breakdowns by gender and enrolment status are also provided. Two-thirds of graduates (66%) selected one of five occupational categories including Sciences, Engineering and Math (19%), Medicine and Health (16%), Teaching (12%),

Managerial and Administrative (10%) and Art and Recreation (9%). These same five occupations were the most popular choices among 72% of graduates who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs. This should not be surprising since these white-collar occupations generally require the most post-secondary education. However, even those who were not enrolled in post-secondary programs had aspirations for jobs requiring post-secondary preparation: 16% aspired to Sciences, Engineering and Math occupations and 13% had career goals in Medicine and Health.

Compared to the previous survey, respondents' career aspirations are very similar. The top 5 occupational aspirations of two-thirds of the 1995 graduates were also the most common choices among 65% of the 1988 graduates. The only difference was in the rank order of the top five choices. In the previous survey, Managerial and Administrative occupations were the most popular followed by Science, Engineering and Math and Medicine and Health occupations.

As expected, males and females had

different career interests. The four top choices for males were Sciences, Engineering and Math (33%), Managerial and Administrative occupations (11%), Fabricating and Repair (10%) and Art and Recreation (8%). Among females, the four most popular choices were Medicine and Health (24%), Teaching (17%), Art and Recreation (11%) and Social Sciences (10%). Males were more than 4 times as likely as females to aim for occupations in Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics while females were more than 4 times as likely as males to have Medicine and Health occupational goals. Females were almost 3 times as likely as males to have aimed for Teaching occupations.

Within the Medicine and Health occupations, females were most likely to aspire to Nursing, Therapy and related Assisting occupations (40%), followed by Other occupations in Medicine and Health (33%) which includes pharmacists, dietitians, optometrists, medical lab technicians and dental hygienists. Females were less likely to aspire to Health Diagnosing and Treating Occupations (27%) which includes physicians, dentists, veterinarians and

Table 9
Career / Occupational Aspirations of Graduates by Selected Characteristics

Occupation/Career	1995 Survey Respondents					1995 Alberta Employment %
	Total %	Males %	Females %	Enrolled Ft in Post-Sec %	Not Enrolled FT in Post-Sec %	
Science, Eng & Math	18.7	33.3	7.5	20.6	16.1	4.3
Medicine & Health	15.9	5.7	23.7	17.6	13.4	4.7
Teaching	12.4	6.1	17.3	15.7	7.8	4.7
Managerial & Administrative	9.8	11.0	8.8	11.1	7.8	14.1
Art & Recreation	9.2	7.5	10.5	7.2	12.0	1.8
Services	8.4	6.6	9.8	5.6	12.4	14.2
Social Sciences & Rel	8.0	5.3	10.2	7.2	9.2	2.3
Fabricating & Repair	4.4	9.6	0.3	5.2	3.2	5.2
Clerical	3.6	0.0	6.4	2.0	6.0	12.5
Sales	2.5	3.9	1.4	2.3	2.8	10.2
Process & Machining	2.3	3.5	1.4	1.6	3.2	3.2
Transp, Mat Hndlg, Other Crafts	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.6	1.4	7.1
Construction Trades	1.3	2.6	0.3	1.0	1.8	6.6
Farming	1.1	2.2	0.3	1.0	1.4	7.1
Forestry, Logging	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.3	1.4	0.3
Number of respondents	523	228	295	306	217	1,373,000

Note: Includes only respondents who provided codeable occupational/career aspirations.
1995 Employment proportions from Statistics Canada's, Labour Force Survey.

osteopaths. By contrast, most males with career aspirations in Medicine and Health chose Health Diagnosing and Treating occupations.

The tendency for females to aspire to different occupations than males was also found in the previous survey. In 1988, females were more than three times as likely to aspire to Medicine and Health occupations, and males more than three times as likely to aspire to Science, Engineering and Mathematics occupations.

It is interesting that in the current survey, 41% of females had career goals in Medicine and Health or Teaching; areas affected by on-going restructuring. The proportion of all graduates with interests in these same areas was 28%. One-third of all graduates enrolled in post-secondary programs also had similar career interests.

A comparison of graduates' career aspirations to the actual distribution of Alberta employment in 1995 points to mismatches with current levels of employment in some occupations. For example, employment in Science, Engineering and Mathematics occupations made up less than 5% of provincial employment in 1995 while 19% of graduates aspired to these occupations. Similarly, the Medicine and Health, and Teaching occupations provided a much smaller share of overall employment compared to the proportion of graduates with such aspirations. Like the results from the previous survey, it is probable that some graduates may change their original career goals because their aspirations are not consistent with the existing employment structure.

Satisfaction With Career Decisions To-Date

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the career decisions they made to-date. Overall, 71% of respondents indicated satisfaction. Those expressing the most satisfaction with their career decisions were those who were definite about their career/occupation aspirations: 62% were

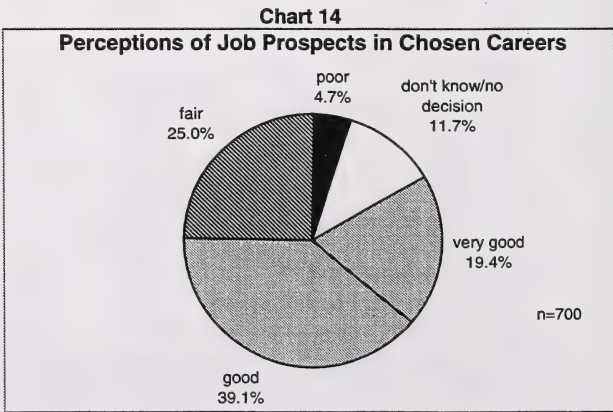
very satisfied and 31% were satisfied, for an overall 93% satisfaction rate. Not surprisingly, those least likely to express satisfaction with their career decisions (34%) were those who experienced career indecision.

Perceptions of Job Prospects in Chosen Careers

Respondents were also asked how they rated their chances of finding a job in their chosen careers. Most respondents (59%) were quite optimistic about their prospects: 19% rated their job chances as very good, 39% as good. Only 25% felt their job prospects were fair while 5% felt their chances of a job in their chosen career were poor. The remaining 12% either didn't know what their job prospects were or had not made any career decisions.

enrolment status. However, among respondents enrolled full-time in post-

All respondents were quite optimistic in rating their chances of getting a job in their chosen career regardless of gender, region, academic performance or



secondary programs, those who were attending colleges or technical institutes were more likely to rate their job chances as good to very good (70%). This should not be surprising given the career oriented nature of college and technical institute programs. Among those enrolled in degree

granting institutions, 54% rated their job prospects in their chosen career as good while only half (50%) of those enrolled in other institutions such as private vocational schools, religious colleges and institutes and Alberta vocational colleges rated their job chances as good.

Self-Employment / Entrepreneurial Interests

As a result of globalization and competitiveness, the structure of work is changing. The self-employment option is increasingly becoming an alternative to the traditional long-term job with a single employer. Over the past 10 years, self-employment grew from 179,000 in 1985 to 273,000 in 1995, an increase of 53%. In 1995 almost 20% of employment in Alberta was self-employment. Small business and entrepreneurial enterprises are becoming the source of new employment. A number of programs have been set up to help unemployed young people start their own businesses through loans and other assistance. These initiatives may encourage youths to pursue their entrepreneurial interests.

Respondents were asked if their career plans included self-employment or starting

their own businesses. Under one-third or 30% of respondents indicated that their career plans included such entrepreneurial endeavors while 31% indicated they had no such plans and 39% indicated they didn't know.

Male respondents (37%) were more likely to be interested in self-employment or entrepreneurship than females (24%). Respondents who were less academically inclined were also more likely to be interested in self-employment or starting their own businesses. Finally, those who were enrolled in colleges and technical institutes were more likely to have such interests: 38% compared to 35% of those enrolled in other institutions (including out of province institutions) and 19% of those enrolled in degree granting institutions.

V. High School Experiences

Repeating Courses

Current survey results indicate that some students prolonged their duration in high school. Despite the fact that all respondents met the requirements for a high school diploma, approximately 9% were still enrolled in high school at the time of the survey.

Almost one-third of respondents (33%) reported that they had repeated one or more courses to improve their grade 12 average. This represents an increase since the previous survey which found that 23% had repeated courses. Alberta Education recently made changes requiring that grade 10 students complete their high school education within three years; this change will make it more difficult for students to prolong their high school education in the future. Effective September 1997, 4th and 5th year high school students will have to finish their high school in the adult continuing education system.

Characteristics such as age, gender, region, eligibility for university, type of high school diploma, and average grade 12 marks were examined to see if these had any influence on the likelihood of repeating grade 12 courses. These 6 variables were all found to be related to the likelihood of repeating courses.

Males were more likely than females to have repeated courses (38% to 28%). This is a departure from the previous survey which found no significant difference between

males' and females' odds of repeating courses (24% and 23%). Previous survey findings for the remaining variables of age, region, university eligibility, type of diploma and average grade 12 marks were similar to current findings to be significantly related to repeating courses.

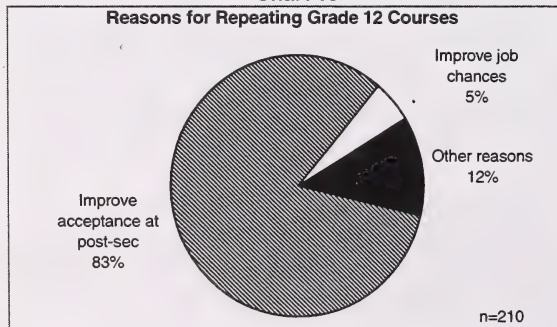
Edmonton region respondents were more likely to have repeated courses, 46% compared to 28% of Calgary respondents and 25% of rural respondents. Once again this is likely due to more stringent eligibility requirements at the University of Alberta.

Not surprisingly, respondents who performed better academically were less likely to repeat courses. Only one-quarter of those who were eligible for university repeated courses, compared to 40% of those who didn't meet this criteria. Those who graduated with general diplomas were also more likely to repeat courses, 38% compared to 30% of those with advanced diplomas. And those with higher grade 12 averages were less likely to repeat courses (20% of those whose grade 12 averages were 70% or more compared to 46% of those whose averages were below 70%). Graduates whose averages were between 60% and 64% were the most likely to repeat courses (49%).

Finally, respondents were also asked their reasons for repeating courses. The majority, 82%, indicated that it was to improve their chances of being accepted at a post-secondary institution (this is comparable to 84% from the 1988 survey). This was the most often identified reason for all respondents regardless of enrolment status, and demographic and academic factors. These results indicate that almost all respondents recognized the importance of continuing into post-secondary programs; only 5% repeated courses to improve their job chances.

Chart 15

Reasons for Repeating Grade 12 Courses



The 12% who gave other reasons for repeating courses gave a variety of explanations such as to get their high school diploma, to pass courses they failed and for

personal reasons such as self-satisfaction and to get a better understanding of the course.

Employment While in School

Combining work and school is the norm among high school youth. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of high school graduates indicated that they had been employed at some point during their last year of high school. They worked an average of 18.4 hours per week. Most (55%) held part-time jobs while 10% held full-time jobs, defined as work of 30 hours or more per week. Almost half or 49% of those who were employed worked 20 hours or more per week. Studies have suggested that this is the point at which work interferes with school work and school performance.⁷

school (70% compared to those who met the criteria for university eligibility 62%). As well, those who graduated with general diplomas or with lower grade 12 averages had higher rates of employment (70% and 71% to 63% of those with advanced high school diplomas and 62% of those with average grade 12 marks of at least 70%). Employment rates by region and by gender were not statistically significant.

Average hours of work were also linked to academic performance. Graduates who performed well academically averaged fewer hours of work. Those who had advanced diplomas and those who had average marks of at least 70% worked an average of 16.8 hours and 16.4 hours per week respectively compared to average hours of 20.3 for those with general diplomas and 20.2 hours among those with grade 12 marks below 70%.

Males also worked more average weekly hours than females (19.8 hours to 17.4 hours). Rural respondents worked the longest average hours.

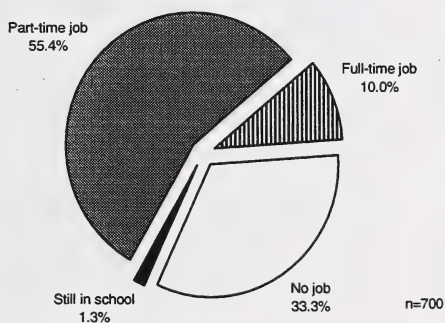
Calgary respondents worked an average of

16.1 hours per week, Edmonton respondents worked 18.8 hours per week while rural respondents averaged 20.1 weekly hours.

Respondents who worked while in school were asked if their employment experiences influenced their career decisions. A minority or 29% of respondents indicated that their employment experiences influenced their career decisions while 65% indicated no influence. A small percentage indicated that they had not made a career decision, 6%.

Chart 16

Employment Status In Last Year of High School



Although males and females were equally as likely to work while in school (65% and 67%), females (89%) tended to work part-time more often than males (79%). Twice as many males (21%) worked full-time as females (11%).

Employment while in school was found to be related to academic performance. Graduates who were not university eligible were more likely to have worked while in

⁷ Gilbert, Sid (1994) Predicting School Leavers and Graduates, Education Quarterly Review, Summer 1995, Vol. 1, Number 2, 59-62.

From the comments provided by respondents as to how these experiences shaped their career decisions, most indicated that their experiences were beneficial. For many, the work experience gave them a chance to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and likes and dislikes in terms of what they wanted to pursue in a career. Some respondents indicated that they wanted to work with

people, others indicated that they wanted to work for themselves rather than for an employer. After working in particular industries, some indicated that they definitely didn't want a career in those industries. They were referring to minimum wage jobs in the fast food and retail industries. Finally, some respondents said that the work experience gave them a push to further their education.

Work Experience or Work-Study Courses

Respondents were also asked if they participated in work experience or work study courses while in high school. One third (34%) indicated that they had. Females (36%) had a slightly higher rate of participation in work experience programs than males (31%) but this difference was not statistically significant.

Region and academic performance were related to the likelihood of participating in work-experience or work-study courses. Rural respondents were more likely to participate in these courses in high school - 42% compared to 33% of Edmonton region respondents and 26% of Calgary region respondents.

Academically, it was respondents who were not the best performers that were more likely to have participated in work-experience programs. Half of respondents with general

diplomas participated - 51% compared to 21% of those with advanced diplomas. Only 25% of those with grade 12 averages of 70% or more participated in work experience programs compared to 43% of those with lower averages.

Over half or 56% of those who participated in high school work-experience courses indicated that these courses influenced their career decisions. At this rate, work experience programs were more influential to respondents' career aspirations than were their other employment experiences which had a 29% influence rate. This indicates that high school work experience programs are having some success in shaping career and education goals.

Females (62%) were more likely than males (47%) to indicate that their work study courses influenced their career aspirations.

Dropping Out of High School

During the 1980s and 1990s, major economic changes including globalization, freer trade, increased competitiveness and technological change led to major structural changes in the workplace. A number of studies have identified a skilled and educated workforce as essential for the country to remain competitive, retain a high standard of living and increase productivity. As a result of the increasingly competitive and changing workplace, completing high school was viewed as a critical step in terms of a minimal level of preparation for the labour market or for further learning. It was anticipated that candidates without a high

school education would fare poorly in the labour market, experiencing higher rates of unemployment, lower earnings and limited occupational choices.

Respondents were asked if they had ever dropped out of high school. Very few respondents indicated that they had (3%). As expected this drop-out rate is much lower than the 19% rate found in the **School Leavers Survey** (April 1991). The latter statistic is based on all 18 to 20 year olds in Alberta while our survey covered high school graduates only.

Use of Career and Post-Secondary Information

Career information plays an important role in assisting Albertans to make informed decisions about learning opportunities. Respondents were asked about the types of career and post-secondary information that they used. Over 90% of respondents received this type of information while in high school. From a list of 10 different information sources, they were asked to indicate which ones they found helpful, or not helpful and which ones they did not use.

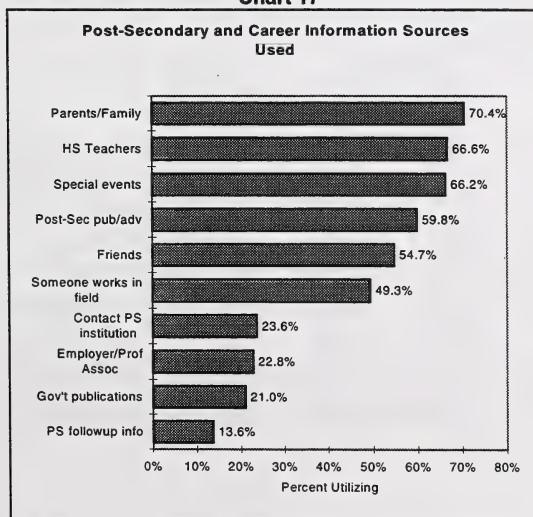
As indicated in Table 10, a ranking of the most often used information sources includes parents or family members, teachers, and special events such as student orientation days, careers days, open

houses and visiting guest speakers. These three sources were used by over 80% of all respondents. However, 20% of those using special events reported that they found them not helpful as did 18% of those who used teachers. The three least used information sources - used by 30% or less - included provincial government publications, employers or professional associations and post-secondary graduate follow-up information. Almost 70% of respondents did not use the publication, *It's About Time to Start Thinking About Your Future*. This publication is geared towards youth and provides general information on each of the post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

Table 10
Post-Secondary & Career Information Sources Used and Helpfulness of Sources

Sources	Utilizing			Not
	Total	Helpful	Not Helpful	Utilizing
Parents / Family	82.9%	85.0%	15.0%	17.1%
Special events (student orientation days, career days, open houses or visiting guest speakers)	82.4%	80.4%	19.6%	17.6%
High School Teachers	81.1%	82.1%	17.9%	18.9%
Post-Secondary publications /advertising	77.8%	76.9%	23.1%	22.2%
Friends	73.1%	74.8%	25.2%	26.9%
Someone working in career	56.4%	87.5%	12.5%	43.6%
Someone you contacted from a post-secondary institution	32.8%	72.0%	28.0%	67.2%
Government of Alberta publications (such as It's About Time to Start Thinking About Your Future, Occupational Profiles, Post-Secondary Education Programs, etc.)	30.1%	59.9%	40.1%	69.9%
Employers / Professional Associations	29.1%	78.4%	21.6%	70.9%
Post-Secondary graduate follow-up information	22.7%	69.8%	30.2%	77.4%

Chart 17



Respondents were also asked which of these information sources they found most helpful. As indicated in Chart 17, the four most useful sources chosen by 73% of respondents included special events (25%) teachers (18%) someone working in the area (17%) and parents (13%).

When most helpful sources was broken down by region, gender and enrolment status, we found that these same four sources were most often selected by respondents.

VI. Views on Education and Jobs

The economy is in transition. Globalization and technological change are restructuring work. The increase in contracting out, in part-time contingency work and downsizing has reduced job security for all workers and intensified the competition for available jobs. The educational requirements of many jobs have increased and the ability to learn and acquire new skills has become a new requirement. Given these trends, the job market that youth face is less certain than it was for their predecessors. The odds of finding a good job or a rewarding career are now much more dependent on having a post-secondary education.

On the whole, post-secondary training does reduce the odds of unemployment. Albertans with higher levels of education have consistently experienced lower

unemployment rates than those with lower levels of education. In 1995 Albertans with university degrees had the lowest unemployment rates (4% followed by those with post-secondary certificates or diplomas, 7%).

This section examines some of the attitudes and beliefs of recent high school graduates. Using a scale of 1 to 5, respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with 9 different points of view on education and jobs. For analysis the scales were collapsed to 3 categories: agree, neutral and disagree. Students' opinions on further education and the job market were also examined while controlling for gender, region, university eligibility and enrolment status to determine if there were any differences between these subgroups.

Necessity of Post-Secondary Education

We expect that over 60% of the new jobs to be created in the next five years will require post-secondary learning. Recent high school graduates overwhelmingly view completion of a post-secondary education as important for employment. A majority (80%) agreed with the statement "a post-secondary education is necessary in order for me to compete for a job". Of the nine views, this

was the one that was most strongly agreed with by all respondents.

Those who attended school in the Edmonton or Calgary regions and those who met the criteria for university eligibility were more likely to believe in the education and job link. As expected, those who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs were more likely to believe in the education and job link - 87% compared to 69% of those who were not enrolled).

At the same time, respondents were aware that acquiring further education did not in any way assure them of a job. Most respondents (60%) agreed with the view, "a post-secondary education offers me no guarantee of a job these

Table 11

1. A post-secondary education is necessary for me to compete for a job

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	79.7%	10.9%	9.4%	700	
Males	76.2%	12.1%	11.7%	315	ns
Females	82.6%	9.9%	7.5%	385	
Edmonton region	84.8%	9.5%	5.8%	243	s
Calgary region	79.5%	9.4%	11.2%	224	
Other Alberta	74.7%	13.7%	11.6%	233	
Univ eligible	86.3%	7.9%	5.8%	329	s
Not Univ eligible	73.9%	13.5%	12.7%	371	
Enroled PS ft	87.1%	7.8%	5.1%	410	s
Not enroled PS ft	69.3%	15.2%	15.5%	290	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Table 12

2. A post-secondary education offers me no guarantee of a job these days

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	60.2%	27.2%	12.7%	698	
Males	57.8%	25.9%	16.3%	313	s
Females	62.1%	28.3%	9.6%	382	
Edmonton region	56.2%	31.8%	12.0%	242	
Calgary region	67.0%	22.8%	10.3%	224	ns
Other Alberta	57.8%	26.7%	15.5%	232	
Univ eligible	62.8%	25.0%	12.2%	328	ns
Not Univ eligible	57.8%	29.2%	13.0%	370	
Enroled PS ft	57.5%	28.9%	13.7%	409	ns
Not enroled PS ft	64.0%	24.9%	11.1%	289	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

days", 27% were neutral and 13% disagreed. Males and females responded differently. Females (62%) were more likely to agree than males (58%) while males were more likely to disagree (16%) than females (10%).

Perceived Returns from Investing in Further Education

In order to get an idea of how students felt about whether they were getting a fair return from investing in post-secondary education, we asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "the amount a student has to pay for continuing education is fair for the benefits he/she gets in return." Only 22% of respondents agreed with this statement. Another 34% were neutral while 44% disagreed. Graduate responses were likely based on their perceptions of returns such

as employment prospects and earnings. In their minds, the returns from further education have diminished compared to what they once were.

Females were the least likely of the subgroups to believe that the perceived returns from further education were fair. Only 17% of females agreed that costs were fair compared to 29% of males. Females (47%) were more likely to disagree than males (40%). This result may indicate that females perceive lower returns from their education in terms of future earnings and job outlook. Research indicates that even among recent post-secondary graduates, median earnings of women have been somewhat lower than that of men at similar levels of educational attainment.

Table 13

3. The amount a student has to pay for continuing education is fair for the benefits he/she gets in return

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	22.2%	34.2%	43.6%	699	
Males	28.7%	31.2%	40.1%	314	s
Females	16.9%	36.6%	46.5%	385	
Edmonton region	21.0%	33.7%	45.3%	243	ns
Calgary region	25.4%	33.9%	40.6%	224	
Other Alberta	20.3%	34.9%	44.8%	232	
Univ eligible	20.7%	36.2%	43.2%	329	ns
Not Univ eligible	23.5%	32.4%	44.1%	370	
Enroled PS ft	24.4%	35.1%	40.5%	410	ns
Not enroled PS ft	19.0%	32.9%	48.1%	289	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Non-Standard Employment

There has been an increase in non-standard forms of employment such as part-time, temporary and contract work. In 1995 the unemployment rate for 15 to 24 year olds was 12.5%, almost twice the rate for the province, 7.8%. In that year 18% of overall employment was part-time but youth had a far larger share at 38%. Due to their inexperience, youth are finding it harder to break into the job market, while those who do find jobs are more vulnerable to less secure forms of employment and more easily laid off by employers.

Only a minority (22%) of respondents agreed with the view, "the job I'm more likely to find will be part-time, temporary or contract work instead of long-term, full-time and secure work"; (29% were neutral and almost 50% disagreed. Respondents who met the

criteria for university eligibility were more likely to disagree (56% versus 44%.) Likewise, those who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs at the time of the survey were more likely to disagree (56% compared to 40% of those who were not enrolled). This is understandable since those enrolled may feel more optimistic about their prospects because they are preparing themselves for better jobs.

Table 14

4. The job I'm more likely to find will be part-time, temporary or contract instead of long-term full-time and secure work

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	21.5%	28.8%	49.8%	699	
Males	18.7%	30.2%	51.1%	315	ns
Females	23.7%	27.6%	48.7%	384	
Edmonton region	22.7%	31.8%	45.5%	242	ns
Calgary region	19.2%	25.9%	54.9%	224	
Other Alberta	22.3%	28.3%	49.4%	233	
Univ eligible	20.3%	23.6%	56.1%	330	s
Not Univ eligible	22.5%	33.3%	44.2%	369	
Enrolled PS ft	19.5%	24.1%	56.4%	411	s
Not enrolled PS ft	24.3%	35.4%	40.3%	288	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Importance of Attitude Versus Education

Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the view, "my attitude is more important for finding a job than having a

post-secondary education". Respondents were least likely to agree (22%) with this view and most likely to disagree (45%).

Another 34% were neutral.

Most respondents regardless of gender, region, eligibility for university and enrolment status rate a post-secondary education as a priority over attitude when it comes to getting employment.

Table 15

5. My attitude is more important for finding a job than having a post-secondary education

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	21.8%	33.5%	44.7%	700	
Males	25.6%	33.5%	40.9%	313	ns
Females	18.7%	33.5%	47.8%	385	
Edmonton region	20.7%	34.4%	44.8%	241	ns
Calgary region	22.2%	30.7%	47.1%	225	
Other Alberta	22.4%	35.3%	42.2%	232	
Univ eligible	22.4%	32.1%	45.5%	330	ns
Not Univ eligible	21.2%	34.8%	44.0%	368	
Enrolled PS ft	19.8%	32.5%	47.7%	409	ns
Not enrolled PS ft	24.6%	34.9%	40.5%	289	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Making Career Plans

Most respondents (70%) disagreed with the view, "there is no point in making career plans - no one knows where the jobs will be in the future", while 20% were neutral and only 9% agreed. Of the nine points of view, this one was the least agreed to or most disagreed with. Not surprisingly, respondents who met the criteria for university eligibility (77%) were more likely to

disagree than those who did not (65%). Likewise, those who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs (74%) were more likely to disagree than those not enrolled (65%). Almost twice as many who were not enrolled in post-secondary studies (13%) agreed with this pessimistic point of view compared to those enrolled (7%).

Table 16

6. There is no point in making career plans - no one knows where jobs will be in future

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	9.3%	20.4%	70.3%	700	
Males	11.4%	21.6%	67.0%	315	ns
Females	7.5%	19.5%	73.0%	385	
Edmonton region	8.7%	19.8%	71.5%	242	ns
Calgary region	11.1%	19.1%	69.8%	225	
Other Alberta	8.2%	22.3%	69.5%	233	
Univ eligible	7.9%	15.5%	76.7%	330	s
Not Univ eligible	10.5%	24.9%	64.6%	370	
Enrolled PS ft	6.8%	19.0%	74.2%	411	s
Not enrolled PS ft	12.8%	22.5%	64.7%	289	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Lifelong Learning

Recent high school graduates are believers in the value of lifelong or continuous

learning. Most respondents agreed with the statement, "the rapid pace of technological change means that I will need to keep upgrading my training throughout my working life" (81%). A large percentage of all respondents (between 75% to 85%) agreed with the need for life long learning regardless of gender, region, university eligibility or enrolment status.

Table 17

7. The rapid pace of technological change means I will need to keep upgrading my training throughout my working life

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	81.3%	13.6%	5.1%	700	
Males	82.5%	11.5%	6.1%	314	ns
Females	80.3%	15.3%	4.2%	386	
Edmonton region	81.8%	14.9%	3.3%	242	ns
Calgary region	85.3%	9.8%	4.9%	225	
Other Alberta	76.8%	15.9%	7.3%	233	
Univ eligible	82.4%	13.9%	3.6%	330	ns
Not Univ eligible	80.3%	13.2%	6.5%	370	
Enrolled PS ft	80.0%	14.8%	5.1%	411	ns
Not enrolled PS ft	83.0%	11.8%	5.2%	289	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Best Job Prospects

Various economists/futurists have attempted to identify where the future jobs will be. One such economist is Nuala Beck who has predicted that the best jobs in terms of pay and stability will be in high knowledge, new economy industries. These are the high

technology sectors including computers. Most respondents agreed with her forecast that the best employment prospects would be in computers, semiconductors, instrumentation, medical research and telecommunications (62% while 27% were neutral and 11% disagreed).

Table 18

8. The best employment prospects will be in computers, semiconductors, instrumentation, medical research & telecommunications

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	62.2%	26.9%	10.9%	696	
Males	55.9%	31.0%	13.1%	313	s
Females	67.4%	23.5%	9.1%	385	
Edmonton region	63.5%	24.9%	11.6%	241	ns
Calgary region	64.6%	24.2%	11.2%	223	
Other Alberta	58.6%	31.5%	9.9%	232	
Univ eligible	64.6%	25.0%	10.4%	328	ns
Not Univ eligible	60.1%	28.5%	11.4%	368	
Enroled PS ft	59.1%	28.2%	12.7%	408	ns
Not enroled PS ft	66.7%	25.0%	8.3%	288	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response ($p < .05$).

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic & response.

Surprisingly, females (68%) were more likely to agree with this point of view than males (56%). This is interesting since a recent survey on computer usage indicates over half of employed women (52%) used computers at work compared to 44% of men (General Social Survey, 1994).

Concern Over Job Prospects

The last view was, "media reports of layoffs and high unemployment cause me concern about my prospects". Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents agreed while 20% were neutral and 17% disagreed. This may

appear to be inconsistent with the earlier finding in the career aspirations section, which found that respondents were largely optimistic about their job prospects: 59% rated their chances of getting a job in their chosen careers as good. It is likely that linking "employment prospects" to "layoffs and high unemployment" influenced responses in this case.

Table 19

9. Media reports of layoffs and high unemployment cause me concern about my own prospects

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Respondents	
Total	63.1%	20.1%	16.8%	697	
Males	57.5%	22.7%	19.8%	313	s
Females	67.7%	18.0%	14.3%	384	
Edmonton region	67.8%	18.2%	14.0%	242	ns
Calgary region	60.1%	22.0%	17.9%	223	
Other Alberta	61.2%	20.3%	18.5%	232	
Univ eligible	67.7%	16.8%	15.5%	328	s
Not Univ eligible	59.1%	23.0%	17.9%	369	
Enroled PS ft	62.3%	19.1%	18.6%	408	ns
Not enroled PS ft	64.4%	21.5%	14.2%	289	

s: significant relationship between characteristic & response

ns: no significant relationship between characteristic &

Although respondents tended largely to be less optimistic, there were differences by gender and university eligibility. Females (68%) were more likely to be worried about their prospects than males (58%). Those who met the criteria for university

eligibility (68%) were more likely to be concerned over job prospects than those who were not eligible (59%).

We explored type of institution attended to see if respondents in degree granting institutions were more likely to be concerned with their job prospects. We found that this was the case - 69% of those enrolled full-time in degree granting institutions agreed that they were concerned about their job prospects compared to 55% of those enrolled in colleges or technical institutes and 63% of those enrolled in other institutions. There are several possible reasons why respondents in degree granting institutions

were more likely to be concerned over job prospects. First, university programs have often been more general and less job specific than college or technical institute programs. Secondly, the sectors which were most likely to employ university graduates are undergoing major change. Until recently, the publicly funded sector was a major recruiter of new university graduates. However, due to on-going restructuring in government, health and education, these industries are no longer absorbing the numbers of graduates they once did.

Respondents' Suggested Changes to the Post-Secondary System

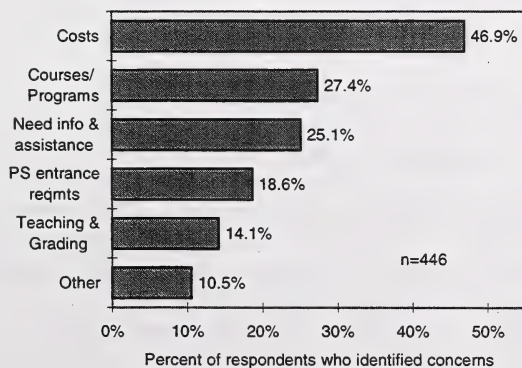
Respondents were asked to describe what they would change in the post-secondary system to make it more relevant for themselves or other students. Given the numerous changes underway in the adult learning system, this question was designed to allow new and potential users of the adult learning system to identify any concerns or make any suggestions for improvement(s).

Sixty-three percent or 446 respondents provided their opinions or suggestions. Roughly half (48%) of the respondents met the criteria for university eligibility and 52%

did not. Over half (57%) were enrolled full-time in post-secondary system while 9% were in high school and 29% were not enrolled. Females were more likely to respond (58%) than males (42%). A breakdown of where they last attended high school was as follows: 35% Edmonton region, 32% Calgary region and 33% over the remainder of the province. Among those who were enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs, 54% were attending degree granting institutions, 36% were attending colleges and technical institutes while 10% were attending other institutions.

Chart 18

Suggested Changes to the Post-Secondary System



All responses were initially coded to at least one of 17 categories and then collapsed to 6 for easier analysis. Responses varied from concerns about costs to specific comments on course and program offerings.

The six broad categories were:

- 1) costs
- 2) courses and programs
- 3) information requirements
- 4) teaching
- 5) entry requirements/access
- 6) other issues.

Costs of Further Education

As indicated in Chart 18 (previous page), 47% of those who responded to the open-ended question commented on the costs of further education. A majority of respondents commented on the cost of tuition while some had concerns about financial aid, student loans, and the cost of textbooks, tutors and living expenses. Generally, the costs associated with further education, including tuition were perceived to be too high and therefore a barrier to the pursuit of further education. A number of respondents expressed their personal difficulties with paying for their education and living expenses. Respondents were clearly concerned about the rising tuition fees combined with an uncertain job market.

It is not clear whether respondents are aware that tuition fees account for roughly 21% of post-secondary expenditures with the remaining 79% subsidized by taxpayers. At any rate, 45% of those who expressed concerns about costs were participating in full-time post-secondary studies.

Most respondents suggested that tuition fees be reduced. Some respondents suggested increasing student loan amounts and making loans more readily available. However, a few indicated that they were apprehensive about carrying a large debt load with no certainty of a job after graduation. An increase in scholarships and grants was also suggested as was a reduction in textbook prices.

Table 20
Comments on Costs of Further Education

- *"Less expensive! Only the rich will be able to afford post-secondary education if current costs of tuition, room and board and books continue to rise the way they consistently have over the last number of years."*
- *"I know that the reasons some of my friends are not enrolled in school is due to the overwhelming price of tuition. When I complete my two years at RDC I do not plan on furthering my education or pursuing a B.F.A. degree. I would love to but the thought of being \$25,000 in debt for the sake of an education frightens me. If I could change anything it would be to put a stop to rising tuition rates."*
- *"Costs seem too high for some people. With minimum wage at \$5.00 per hour it is hard to finance living on your own and going to college."*
- *"there is no guarantee that a secure job will be found. Yet student loan payments, etc. must still be made. Where will the money come from?"*
- *"I would like to see tuition fees and entrance grades lower. This would enable a wider population to attend school."*
- *"I want free education for everyone with my taxes, not public subsidies for private corporations."*
- *"More access to financial aid based on factors other than parents income."*

Content, Courses and Programs

27% of respondents commented on specific post-secondary courses or programs or made suggestions for new courses. There was a clear division between respondents on general courses and programs. Some

respondents could not see the relevance of the general courses required in their program. Others felt that the mandatory general studies program was irrelevant. Generally, these were students who knew

exactly what programs of study they wanted to pursue and they didn't want to waste their time or money on what they considered to be non-essentials. One respondent estimated that through the elimination of non-relevant courses from a program, he could save himself an entire years' worth of schooling. Conversely, some respondents were less sure of their program interests and suggested that the number of general courses be expanded.

The job aspects of education were also raised. Respondents suggested that course content be more relevant to the job market. Many recommended that practical hands-on experience and co-op programs be made

part of the learning experience. Practical experience was perceived as valuable preparation for the "real world".

Several respondents commented on the importance of computer skills and computer literacy. They suggested that computer training be incorporated into all post-secondary programs. Finally, a few respondents suggested more flexible course offerings in order to accommodate work and study.

The introduction of applied degree programs in Alberta in the fall of 1995 is an attempt to address the demands for linking education to practical experience.

Table 21
Comments on Content/Courses/Programs:

- *"Abolish mandatory General Studies. Give students the option to enter any faculty in their first year."*
- *"All universities should consider a broader first year so students don't get to third year and decide they don't like what they're doing."*
- *"I really like the idea of co-op programs in university. ... I get right out into the job and learn site-specific skills! That is what would keep me motivated in the field."*
- *"I would like university to be a little less abstract and more skill oriented."*
- *"Stronger ties between the universities and the job market."*
- *"to have all courses university transferable to other institutes."*
- *"Flexible courses such as a larger variety of night and weekend courses for working students."*
- *"Mandatory computer courses for all post-secondary educational requirements. Many of my peers in post-secondary institutions still have trouble with basic word processing and computer skills. Effective writing is mandatory at U of C; why not computer literacy?"*

Need for Information and Assistance

One-quarter of respondents indicated that they needed information and assistance to help them integrate successfully into the adult learning system or make decisions about programs. The assistance required ranged from simple information to much more personal attention. The kinds of information that were most often identified

included institutional publications on programs and course offerings, registration procedures, and program specific job outcomes. Some respondents had difficulties in understanding institutional publications, others did not know how to choose course prerequisites or options, or how to change faculties. A few indicated

that they had difficulties in getting anyone to help them. One respondent commented "I find myself ignored by the system I've enrolled in." Clearly, some respondents required much more personal one-on-one guidance in choosing courses and planning their studies.

For many the transition to post-secondary from high school was not easy. This is a time of much personal growth as indicated by a respondent who recommended a course in "adjusting to university life" with the a need for emotional growth, as well as the need to develop library, studying and time management skills. A number of respondents suggested better orientations for new students and more student assistance services.

One group of respondents was uncertain about what program of study to pursue. A few questioned whether their programs of study would enable them to find employment in the future. There were numerous suggestions that career counseling be

improved, and that counseling be offered far earlier in the school system. The need for counselors and related materials to be more current was also pointed out. Other recommendations called for post-secondary institutions to advertise more, make more school visits and provide more information to high schools.

As a result of new policy directions, Alberta post-secondary institutions are being held more accountable. This has resulted in more attention being paid to student satisfaction and employment outcomes. All publicly funded institutions will be required to publish performance indicators by June 1997. This should start to address the need for information on program-specific employment outcomes. Other initiatives are underway at post-secondary institutions to more successfully integrate new students. For example, The University of Calgary is planning a compulsory 4-day orientation program for first year students to ease the transition from high school.

Table 22
Comments on Need for Information & Adjustment Requirements:

- *"There needs to exist resources that extend beyond help with registration. There seemed to be difficulty in understanding what courses were necessary, which options counted, prerequisites, change of faculty procedures, etc."*
- *"I want to go into education and I know some information but I need someone to sit down with me and tell me straight what's the best route to take in becoming a Secondary Drama Educator."*
- *"More statistics on employment in Alberta and employment rates pertaining to specific career choices."*
- *"To see how many people have good jobs because of their education. To see evidence that shows my time in post-secondary education is worth my while."*
- *"While attending high school, it would be of great use to make it mandatory to inform students in career decision making. A lot of students are ignorant of the realities of making a career for themselves."*
- *"A course in adjusting to university life (emotional changes, library skills, time management, study skills...) would be a good recommended course for first year if taken seriously."*
- *"The information about post-secondary education was usually contradictory or out of date. This made it very difficult to make an educated decision."*

Post-Secondary Entrance Requirements or Access

Comments about entrance requirements for post-secondary institutions were raised by 19% of respondents. Most suggested that the average grade requirement for entry be lowered and that the number of spaces be increased so that more could attend. Lack of access due to lower grades was viewed as detrimental to their future job prospects.

However, there were a few respondents who wanted the average requirements raised in order to maintain a quality education. It was suggested that other factors be considered in determining

acceptance such as attitude, character and aptitude.

To order to increase access at post-secondary institutions, a \$47-million Access Fund was set up to create 10,000 additional spaces at institutions. By March 1996, 91 projects had been approved and 10,601 spaces were created. Programs were approved for funding if they were responsive to the needs of Albertans, innovative in delivery and cost effective. Many of the approved programs provided work experience components.

Table 23
Comments on Post-Secondary Entrance Requirements and Access:

- *"More room available for students".*
- *"Now a days, you can't get a decent job without college or university. The acceptance standards are way too high. Post-secondary needs to be brought down to the level of the average high school student from a middle class home".*
- *"Requirement levels raised instead of lowered. It seems to be becoming more difficult to find a job in your field with a university degree. I don't understand how allowing people with lower academic grades and enlarging the number of people eligible to enroll in university will do anything but reduce a degree to a completely useless, yet expensive piece of paper. It's a shame to see a U of C diploma reduced to a joke."*
- *"Instead of entrance requirements being based on grades alone have attitude and character added on."*
- *"It would be more convenient if this program had been offered a little closer to home."*

Teaching, Grading and Quality Issues

Concerns about teaching quality and grading were raised by 14% of respondents. Many suggested smaller classes. Large class sizes were perceived to lead to lower quality learning experiences, reduced teacher-student interaction and lower grades. Among the comments were that teachers were complacent, not qualified to teach, more interested in their research than their students and that they were not available to

students. Suggested changes included more guest speakers, a different teaching style, more teacher-student interaction, more teaching assistants and student evaluations of their teachers.

A number of respondents commented on their dissatisfaction with grading on the bell curve. They felt it was unfair and didn't reflect their achievements.

Table 24
Comments on Teaching, Grading & Quality:

- *"Classes should not be so full. Having hundreds of kids in a class makes it very hard to learn. ... The professors don't really get in touch with students. There would be more one-on-one if classes were smaller and therefore better grades."*
- *"lower student-to-teacher ratio, more teaching assistants, more outside help for courses."*
- *"I wish profs would be more interested in the students and not so focused on their research."*
- *"The classrooms are already crowded enough which makes it hard to learn. If tuition and class size keeps growing it will be nearly impossible to get your money's worth in education."*
- *"I strongly disagree with grading on the curve to any degree. I am aware of a weeding out process but I feel that it is unfair to achieve 70 - 85% which are 7s and 8s on the stanine scale only to have it brought down by an expected (predetermined) class average. If I work hard and get a 7 or 8 that is what I would expect to end up with."*

Other Issues / Suggestions

Finally, 10% of respondents made a variety of other suggestions to improve the post-secondary system. A few suggested that colleges be given degree granting status or be able to expand their degree granting programs. Other suggestions for change were that institutions provide more study areas, keep up with technology, acquire

more computers, and adequately supply laboratories and libraries. One respondent wanted post-secondary institutions to be more involved in job placement programs and another wanted a job guarantee after completion of a university degree.

Table 25
Other Comments/Suggestions

- *"Get some university courses offered at RDC."*
- *"Give GPRC degree granting status."*
- *"More technical schools."*
- *"Job placement programs more involved."*
- *"Lab facilities supplied with proper equipment and with proper products. Library facilities with books and journals ..."*

APPENDIX

1995 High School Survey Questionnaire

1995 HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

Please note that in this survey, a post-secondary institution is any one of the following:

- a university
- a public or private college
- a technical institute
- an Alberta Vocational College
- a religious institute of higher learning
- a private vocational school
- a nursing school

1. What is your current enrollment status? (Circle 1 or 2 or 3)

- 1 enrolled in a post-secondary institution
- 2 enrolled in an apprenticeship program ⇒ **Go to Question 17a**
- 3 not enrolled in a post-secondary institution ⇒ **Go to Question 14**

2. What is the name of the institution you are attending now?

3. What is your program of study?

(Be specific, e.g.: Bachelor of Arts in English, Heavy Duty Mechanic, etc.)

4. Are you a full-time or part-time student? (Circle 1 or 2)

- 1 Full-time enrolled
- 2 Part-time enrolled ⇒ **Go to Question 13**

5. Which of the following are helping you to finance the costs of your education and living expenses? (**PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT ARE IMPORTANT**)

- 1 Your own savings and summer jobs
- 2 Scholarships
- 3 Your parents and family
- 4 Working part-time
- 5 Working full-time
- 6 A student loan
- 7 Government grants, bursaries (**PLEASE SPECIFY**) _____
- 8 Other (**PLEASE SPECIFY**) _____

6. Did you apply for admission to more than one post-secondary institution **in Alberta**?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Did you apply to a post-secondary institution **outside of Alberta**?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

7a. Why did you choose the post-secondary institution you are now attending?
(CIRCLE ALL THAT ARE IMPORTANT)

- 1 The tuition fees were lower
- 2 It is a relatively small institution
- 3 The program I wanted was offered there
- 4 It was close to home
- 5 It had a good reputation
- 6 It has good facilities
- 7 My application was not accepted by the institution that I chose first
- 8 I couldn't afford to go to any other institution
- 9 Qualifications for admission were lower
- 10 Qualifications for admission were higher
- 11 The institution had a high job placement rate
- 12 Scholarship or bursaries
- 13 Advice from teachers
- 14 My friends are attending here
- 15 Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

7b. Which of the above was the **most** important?
Print number here _____

8. Did you apply for admission to more than one program of study at the post-secondary institution you are now attending?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

9a. Why did you choose your current program or field of study?
(CIRCLE ALL THAT ARE IMPORTANT)

- 1 Personal interest in the subject
- 2 It would help me get a high paying job
- 3 It is required to get into the career I want
- 4 It offers good employment prospects
- 5 It offers me a range of occupational choices
- 6 I was not accepted into my first choice for a program of study
- 7 It provides specific skills that I will be using on the job
- 8 It provides technical training
- 9 It would prepare me for transfer to university
- 10 It provides practical skills (e.g.: writing, thinking and problem solving) that are useful in many jobs
- 11 Low entrance requirements meant I could get accepted
- 12 Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

9b. Which of the above was the **most** important?
Print number here _____

10a. Why did you decide to continue your education after leaving high school?
(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 1 Parents or relatives wanted me to continue
- 2 It was necessary to get me into the career I have chosen
- 3 It gives me the opportunity to improve my quality of life
- 4 I could not find a job
- 5 I didn't want to take a break between high school and post-secondary
- 6 I enjoy learning
- 7 It would improve my chances of getting a better job
- 8 I prefer to continue my education rather than look for a job in the current economy
- 9 Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

10b. Which of the above was the **most** important?
Print number here _____

11. Are you confident that you will finish your current program of studies?

- 1 Yes, in how many years? _____
- 2 No
- 3 Not sure

If "no", why not?

12. Rate how important it is to you that your future employment be related to your chosen program of studies.

Circle your choice on a scale of 1 (very important) to 5 (not important).

1	2	3	4	5
Very important				Not important

⇒ Now we would like to ask you about your future career, Go to Question 17a

13. Why are you attending part-time? _____

⇒ Go to Question 16a

14. Are you attending high school now?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

15a. Why are you not attending a post-secondary institution?

(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY TO YOU)

- 1 I had a job already
 - 2 I don't see that it will benefit me to continue my education
 - 3 My family and I can't afford the cost of post-secondary education
 - 4 My grades were not high enough
 - 5 I wanted to earn money
 - 6 I needed a break from school
 - 7 I wasn't accepted by the post-secondary institution that I wanted to attend
 - 8 I couldn't afford to move away from home in order to attend
 - 9 I am taking time to decide what to do
 - 10 I was unable to get a student loan
 - 11 Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____
-

15b. Which of the above was the **most** important reason?

Print number here _____

16a. Do you think you will pursue post-secondary studies on a full-time basis at sometime in the future?

- 1 Yes, definitely ⇒ Go to Question 16b
- 2 Yes, probably ⇒ Go to Question 16b
- 3 Not sure ⇒ Go to Question 16b
- 4 No, probably not ⇒ Go to Question 17a
- 5 No, definitely not ⇒ Go to Question 17a

16b. If you answered "yes, definitely", or "yes, probably", how soon after your graduation from high school do you think you will be attending?

- 1 Within one year
- 2 Within 3 years
- 3 Within 5 years
- 4 After 5 years
- 5 Not sure

17a. Do you have a clear idea of what career or occupation you hope to be in 5 years from now?

- 1 Yes, definitely ⇒Go to Question 17b
- 2 Yes, more or less ⇒Go to Question 17b
- 3 I am considering several options ⇒Go to Question 17b
- 4 I will still be a student ⇒Go to Question 18
- 5 Not sure ⇒Go to Question 18

17b. If you can, please indicate **what career or occupation** you hope to be in? (e.g.: legal secretary, electrical engineer, heavy duty mechanic, etc.) If you are considering several options, you may provide two choices.

18. How satisfied are you with the career decisions you have made to-date?
- 1 Very satisfied
 - 2 Satisfied
 - 3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - 4 Dissatisfied
 - 5 Very dissatisfied
 - 6 Have not made any career decisions
19. How would you rate your chances of finding a job in your chosen career?
- 1 Very good
 - 2 Good
 - 3 Fair
 - 4 Poor
 - 5 Very poor
 - 6 Don't know
 - 7 Have not made any career decisions
20. Is it part of your career plan to be self-employed or start your own business?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 Don't know
21. What is your current employment status?
- 1 Paid employment or self-employed
How many hours do you normally work each week? (If you have more than one job, total the number of hours worked per week) _____
 - 2 Unemployed but looking for paid employment
 - 3 Not looking for paid employment
22. Did you have a job at any time in your last year of high school?
- 1 Yes, how many hours per week did you normally work? _____
 - 2 No ⇒ **Go to Question 23a**
 - 3 Still in high school ⇒ **Go to Question 26**
- If "yes" did your employment experiences influence your career decision?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No ⇒ **Go to Question 23a**
 - 3 Have not made any career decisions
- If "yes" please indicate how your employment experiences influenced your career decision.

- 23a. Did you participate in work-experience or work-study courses when you were in high school?
- 1 Yes ⇒ **Go to Question 23b**
 - 2 No ⇒ **Go to Question 24**
- 23b. If "yes", did the experience influence your career decisions?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 Have not made any career decisions
24. Did your family encourage you to enroll in a post-secondary education program right after you left high school?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 Maybe
 - 4 I don't know my family's wishes
25. Did you ever drop out of school at some point before you left high school?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
26. How much did parental/family factors influence your career choice decisions to-date?
- 1 Very influential
 - 2 Somewhat influential
 - 3 Not at all influential
 - 4 Don't know
27. Is there a university, college or technical institute close enough to your family home that you could attend without having to move away?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 Don't know
- 28a. Did you repeat any course(s) to improve your Grade 12 average?
- 1 Yes ⇒ **Go to Question 28b**
 - 2 No ⇒ **Go to Question 29a**
- 28b. If you answered "yes", why did you repeat the course(s)?
- 1 To improve my chances of getting a job after leaving high school
 - 2 To improve my chances of being accepted by a post-secondary institution
 - 3 Other (please specify) _____
-

29a. Did you get any information on post-secondary education, careers and occupations while you were in school?

1 Yes

2 No ⇒ Go to Question 30

29b. Indicate for each of the following information sources whether you found them helpful, not helpful or did not use them. For each category circle 1 for **helpful**, 2 for **not helpful**, and 3 for **did not use**

	Helpful 1	Not helpful 2	Not used 3
1) Your friends	1	2	3
2) One or more of your high school teachers	1	2	3
3) Your parents or family member(s)	1	2	3
4) Special events: student orientation days, career days, open houses or visting guest speakers	1	2	3
5) Post-secondary insitutions' publications or advertising	1	2	3
6) Someone who works in the area in which you would like a job or career	1	2	3
7) Someone you contacted from a post-secondary institution	1	2	3
8) Employers and professional associations you contacted	1	2	3
9) Post-secondary graduate follow-up information	1	2	3
10) Government of Alberta publications (such as <i>It's About Time to Start Thinking About Your Future, Occupational Profiles, Post-Secondary Education Programs, etc.</i>)	1	2	3

29c. Which of the above did you find the **most** useful?

Print number here _____

30. If you could change anything in the post-secondary system to make it more relevant for yourself or other students, what would you like to see changed?

31. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of following views on education and jobs? For each view circle your choice of 1 for **Strongly Agree** through 5 for **Strongly Disagree**

		Strongly Agree ←				→ Strongly Disagree
		1	2	3	4	5
1)	A post-secondary education is necessary in order for me to compete for a job					
2)	A post-secondary education offers me no guarantee of a job these days					
3)	The amount a student has to pay for continuing education is fair for the benefits he/she gets in return					
4)	The job that I'm more likely to find will be for part-time, temporary or contract work instead of long-term, full-time and secure work					
5)	My attitude is more important for finding a job than having a post-secondary education					
6)	There is no point in making career plans --- no one knows where the jobs will be in the future					
7)	The rapid pace of technological change means that I will need to keep upgrading my training throughout my working life					
8)	The best employment prospects will be in computers, semiconductors, instrumentation, medical research and telecommunications					
9)	Media reports of layoffs and high unemployment cause me concern about my prospects					

32. What kind of Grade 12 diploma or certificate did you receive?

- 1 General diploma
- 2 Advanced diploma
- 3 Advanced diploma with excellence
- 4 Certificate of Achievement
- 5 Other, (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

33. What was the overall average of your Grade 12 marks?

- 1 Below 50%
- 2 50 - 59%
- 3 60 - 64%
- 4 65 - 69%
- 5 70% and over

34. How many older brothers and sisters do you have? _____

If none, ⇒ **Go to Question 35**

Did any of them attend a post-secondary institution?

1 Yes

2 No

Were any of them in an apprenticeship trade?

1 Yes, What Trade(s)? _____

2 No

3 Don't know

35. What is the highest level of educational attainment reached by your parents?
(**CIRCLE ONE FOR EACH OF YOUR PARENTS**)

Father Mother

1 1 Elementary school or less

2 2 Junior high school

3 3 Some high school

4 4 Completed high school

5 5 Trade certificate

6 6 Some college, technical institute or other post-secondary training

7 7 Some university

8 8 Completed college, technical institute or other post-secondary training

9 9 University degree

10 10 More than 1 university degree

11 11 I don't know

36. Gender

1 Male

2 Female

37. Year of birth _____

38. What is the name of the high school you graduated from or last attended?

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Please seal the completed survey in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope provided and mail it as soon as possible.

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